

Body of Leaders.

**How can creative practice research float the
potential for new forms of leadership
behaviour in organisations?**

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‘The soul craves beauty
Yet our world languishes in ugliness.’
– *John O’Donohue (2003)*

‘It doesn’t have to be that way.
Daring to care is the least we can do.’
– *Nancy Adler (2010)*

Signed certificate of original authorship

I, Christopher Conroy declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy, in the School of Communication/Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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Statement indicating the format of thesis

What follows in this PhD thesis is a relatively unconventional non-linear examination of organizational leadership through the lens of creative practice research (CPR). Qualitative research through practice (Hope, 2016), in the form of the fictional *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript has been interwoven throughout the thesis chapters as a 'scriptology' (Rhodes, 2018) to work in unison with the CPR methodology. Unlike a conventional thesis, the literature review is not limited to a dedicated section under that title. Rather, a review of the literature is conducted throughout the chapters of the thesis as the story unfolds. In addition, a series of personal and professional semi-fictionalised stories are interwoven under the heading '*Reflections*'. While based on the recollections of myself, and/or others, of a real event in which I was involved or had relayed to me, these stories purposefully have imaginary details added or some facts changed such as names, places, gender, time period or circumstances to protect the identity of people involved. They are incorporated into chapters to provide genuine case study examples of the themes being examined. The overall aim is to create a

work that is an experimental, reflexive, personal as well as theoretically informed creative-critical process of incubation and emergent becoming.

Publications and Conference Papers

During the course of this PhD, the following publications and conference presentations have arisen:

2020 NiTRO Non-Traditional Research Outcomes

Title: When it comes to leadership ethics, truth is stranger than fiction. (Co-authored with Professor Craig Batty, Dr. Noel Maloney and Professor Carl Rhodes). Edition 30, <https://nitro.edu.au/>

2019 New Writing: The International Journal for the Practice and Theory of Creative Writing

Title: Writing the Organizational Crisis: Embodied Leadership Engaged Through the Lens of a Playscript. (Co-authored with Professor Craig Batty).

2018 International Studying Leadership Conference (ISLC) Lancaster UK.

Title: Authentic leadership: Circling the same buoys? Can creative writing assist in relaunching the language of leadership? (Conference paper presented 18 December 2017).

2017 Journal of Small Business and Enterprise Development

Title: Exploring the role of employee voice between high-performance work system and organizational innovation in small and medium enterprises. (Co-authored with Muhammad Athar Rasheed, Khuram Shahzad, Sajid Nadeem and Muhammad Usman Siddique).

2016 European Group for Organization Studies (EGOS) Naples, Italy.

Title: Followers can be leaders too, can't they? Reframing 'Them and Us' to enrich our understanding of the multiple intersecting dialectics of the leader-follower dichotomy. (Conference paper, EGOS Sub-theme 47: Reclaiming the Shadow for Leadership, presented July 2016).

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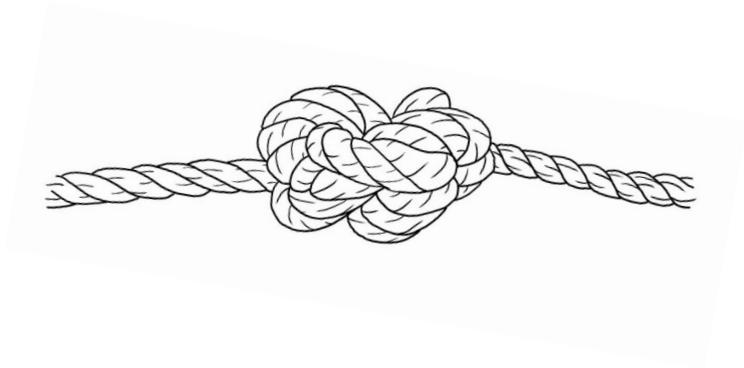
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Abstract (maximum 400 words)

In a sea of endless stories of organisational ethical scandals, many of which are attributed to 'failed leadership' on the part of government, business, religious and community leaders, this PhD examines how creative practice research can be used as a way of inspiring – *or suggesting* – new forms of leadership behaviour. In the processual nature of being in our lives, if experience is valued as primary to consciousness as a way of active belonging, then it is argued that creative writing – and here specifically, scriptwriting – is a powerful medium to examine organisational experiences, especially those where an erosion of trust has occurred. By deploying the lens of affect in embodied responses through the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.*, the PhD asks us to move beyond singular, scientific modes of cognitive analysis towards – through creative practice – the elevation of emergent data from our physical senses. Experimental artistic forms apprehend experiences as a whole that allows subjective meaning to emerge, and so this PhD seeks to complement knowledge that is gained through objective scientific methods that view the phenomenon of leadership through its constituent parts. With

an aim of rendering a focus on emerging action that avoids the binary 'blame game', the PhD positions creative writing as a practice that provides the necessary balance for science to work in harmony with art and craft. As harmony assumes variation, not sameness, experimentation with the language of leadership has made expanded meaning possible through this research. Further, a dramaturgical process in which knowledge and personal experience is translated into dramatic fiction, not dichotomously pitting fact against fiction, provides multiple ways of seeing and thinking about leadership. With events, stories and concepts structured as dramatic scenes and acts, new ways of considering organisational conflicts, motives, moods, backstories and places emerge. It is argued that this mode of research allows new thinking in organisational fields of leadership, business ethics, management development, organisational culture and change management, and contributes to the artistic-aesthetic realm of creative practice research more broadly.





INTRODUCTION

In 2016, the year this PhD journey began, Australia's Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel made clear his requirement of university researchers to deliver more stories. Stories that illuminate, stories that paint vivid pictures 'and enrich our need to understand the essence of being human':

As Chief Scientist, I am encouraged every day by the science stories I hear [...] Today, more than ever, we need to recognize that achievement in science takes many forms. We need great scientists – but we also need great teachers, business innovators and community leaders (Australian Government Chief Scientist, 2016a).

While launching the Storytime Pledge campaign in December that year, Dr Finkel observed, '[W]e can say that a love of reading and a passion for science go hand in hand, born of that same human instinct to question, to imagine and to explore (Australian Government Chief Scientist, 2016b).

Finkel's comments highlight the power of stories to help us to view phenomena through a range of perspectives, creating the potential to challenge assumptions, disrupt entrenched thinking and design new solutions. This is important because disruption and reinvention have been at the centre of human experience throughout history.

Stories abound in organisations – stories of success, collaboration, failure, growth, waste, fame, teamwork, fortune, struggle, achievement and so on. Not only do each and every one of us, as organisational members, have our own stories to tell but corporate folklore within organisations also generates stories that serve to establish or influence cultural norms. Many such stories have at their centre fabled stories of leaders guiding their followers through organisational experiences using leadership styles as widely varied as heroic, authentic, transformational, transactional, managerial, inspirational, charismatic, relational, dictatorial, ethical, adaptive, spiritual, distributive, visionary, authoritarian, courageous, empathic and in service of others (including followers), to name a few.

But do human beings charged with the responsibility of leadership always live up to the adjectives commonly used to describe them? Is it fair to expect that they should? Might the organisational phenomenon we call 'leadership' adopt a different form if viewed through the alternative lens of arts-based practice in creative writing?

We live in a time of endless organisational stories, often featuring negative news media headlines. These include corporate ethical scandals and cover-ups, employer wage theft from workers, public sector corruption, ongoing sexual harassment in police and defence forces, fraud and corruption in unions, unethical destruction of ancient historical sites by mining companies. Elite international sporting fields have not been spared from cheating, misconduct and accusations of 'failed leadership' (Ferris 2018) at the centre of an Australian Test Cricket ball-tampering scandal. Also prominent are political party crises such as branch-stacking, electoral fraud and the turnover of six Australian Prime Ministers within eight short years between 2010 and 2018 as each was deposed by the backroom deals of 'faceless men' within their own party. The alleged criminal deficiencies of our moral guardians have been exposed through child sexual abuse convictions of clergy. This included the conviction and incarceration of the most senior Catholic in Australia and former treasurer to the Vatican and Holy See, Cardinal George Pell in December 2018 prior to his failed appeal to the Supreme Court of Victoria in August 2019 and subsequent successful appeal to the High Court of Australia in April 2020. The Pell case followed repeatedly unethical religious institutional responses to child sexual abuse crimes perpetrated by church and community leaders over many decades. One example involved Anthony Foster and his wife Chrissie who dedicated the past two decades to seeking justice for abuse victims within the Catholic Church. Their tireless campaigning to bring to account the perpetrators of child sexual abuse fundamentally changed Australia (Lord, 2017).

The allegation by the Fosters that convicted Melbourne paedophile priest Father Kevin O'Donnell, who was in jail after pleading guilty to 31 years of offending, had repeatedly raped two of the Foster's primary school-aged daughters, Emma and Katie, in the 1980s, was met with distrust by the church leader responsible for O'Donnell and the architect of the victim redress scheme known as the Melbourne Response, former Archbishop of Melbourne George Pell (Hall, 2020). In her statement to the Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse, Chrissie Foster states that Pell wanted proof of the offending against the Foster girls and allegedly said: "If you don't like what we're doing take us to court" and "It's all gossip until it's proven in court and I don't listen to gossip" (Commonwealth of Australia, 2017, p. 9). Chrissie Foster later responded with incredulity: "What proof is there? My five-year-old did not take a video camera with her when O'Donnell took her to there [sic] and video it to say 'ah, here's the proof'," (Hall, 2020). This set the family on its course to stand-up to church power and find justice for all victims of sexual assault. 'Emma [Foster] suffered from eating

disorders, drug addiction and self-harm and in 2008 she overdosed on medication and died, aged 26' (Ibid.).

The erosion of trust in leadership as a result of such scandals is profound, ongoing and a global phenomenon. In 2019, management scholars Steven Taylor and Elena Antonacopoulou cite the British House of Lords major report *In Professions We Trust* that 'highlights the eroding trust in professions and professionals (bankers, doctors, lawyers) [...] [which] cannot be addressed through more regulation using codes of ethical conduct or indeed calls for moral action to underpin professional practice' (Taylor & Antonacopoulou, 2019, p. 1).

Lamenting the state of leadership and organisational change, organisation scholar Mark Hughes challenges the globally acclaimed work of Harvard organisational change expert John Kotter, whose 1996 book *Leading Change* is 'by far the most cited book about leadership and organizational change' (Hughes, 2016, p. 464). Hughes argues:

At the very least we need to debate the current pitiful state of understanding leadership and organisational change [...] rather than continuing to cite Kotter's flawed analysis (Ibid., p. 458).

Highlighting the tragic circumstances of the 2008 Global Financial Crisis while citing Kotter's 7th edition of *Leading Change* in 2012, Hughes argues:

Kotter's belief that unprecedented change was occurring, yet that *Leading Change* was now more relevant than when first published in 1996, fuelled the writing of this paper. It was as if the 2008 global financial recession never really happened. As if a leadership thought leader was announcing in 2012 – It's business as usual! (Ibid., p. 463).

Since the July 2016 commencement of this PhD, Australia has experienced numerous significant official investigations into the failure of regulators to effectively contain the power abusing mistreatment of customers, employees, opponents, constituents, union members, parishioners, children – human beings – innocent victims across a range of organisations and service delivery industries. This includes three of the most powerful and expensive investigations in the history of Australia, all of which expose failures of organisational leadership and government regulators:

- 2013–17 Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Final Report 15 December 2017)

- 2017–18 Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry (Final Report 4 February 2019)
- 2019–20 Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (in progress).

Recent transcripts of hearings from the Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry demonstrate the impact of financial institutional greed on the lives of innocent people and their loved ones. As Commissioner Kenneth Hayne detailed in the executive summary of his interim report:

Too often, the answer seems to be greed – the pursuit of short-term profit at the expense of basic standards of honesty. How else is charging continuing advice fees to the dead to be explained? (Commonwealth of Australia 2018a, p. xix)

How did we arrive at this dehumanising organisational milieu?

One cause might be unexpected disruptive forces in globalised economies, which have created innumerable new challenges for organisations. In grasping for new ways of understanding the crisis, an increasingly adopted response in both managerial practice in organisations and organisational research in the academy has been to locate these challenges in the context of a VUCA world (Fleming et al., 2018). Originating from military counterinsurgency situations requiring the containment of an unknown enemy, the term ‘VUCA’ is formed from the words volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous. Management consultants such as Chris Arkenberg from Deloitte argue that:

[E]lements of VUCA are not new but the modern world has amplified them. Amid globalization, instantaneous communications, and innovation ecosystems, leaders are more challenged by continuous change. Twentieth-century tools for a structured and predictable world are becoming less capable. Command-and-control management styles appear rigid, unresponsive, and fragile (Arkenberg, 2019).

Writing in the fields of strategic leadership and project management, Indian army veteran Lt Col Vikram Bakshi highlights the adoption of the term VUCA in the corporate world as being a result of similarities with military warfare in situations of survival in disruptive, turbulent times:

Volatile. It means the working condition is laden with immediate, unexpected problems. We can easily predict the problems and deal with them if there is a strategy in place.

Uncertain. Being unclear about the present situation and future outcome, it becomes hard to know whether a change will bring a positive or negative result. We call it Fog of War.

Complexity. The situation has multiple factors and interconnected issues that signify the multiplicity of critical decision-making factors.

Ambiguity. It is a lack of clarity facing the unknown (Bakshi, 2017, p. 2).

The emergence of VUCA follows the extensive use in management and business education of ancient Chinese military theorist Sun Tzu's book *The Art of War* (Lee et. al., 1998) two central tenets of which involve 'warfare and deception' (McCormick, 2001, p. 285).

So, it has come to this. Organisational life has been reduced to a military warfare battlefield needing to be brought into line by stern, legal expert Commissioners in government-sanctioned Royal Commission investigations.

Naturally, the focus of this PhD has more humble, modest aims than the omnipotent nature and force of a Royal Commission. However, the very establishment of such expensive, invasive and powerful legal investigations strongly validates a suggestion that all is not as well as it might previously have appeared in the world of organisational leadership and management, especially in terms of how some would fervently like us to believe their organisations to be viewed.

In this PhD I contend that it would be wise to consider viewing the organisational field from a wider variety of perspectives than the scientific, economic perspective so dominant in business, government and business education industries. However, broader perspectives such as legal and military are not the perspectives that come to mind.

Australian mainstream media cartoonist Michael Leunig captures a sense of the current state in his cartoon *The Quitter* (Figure 1).

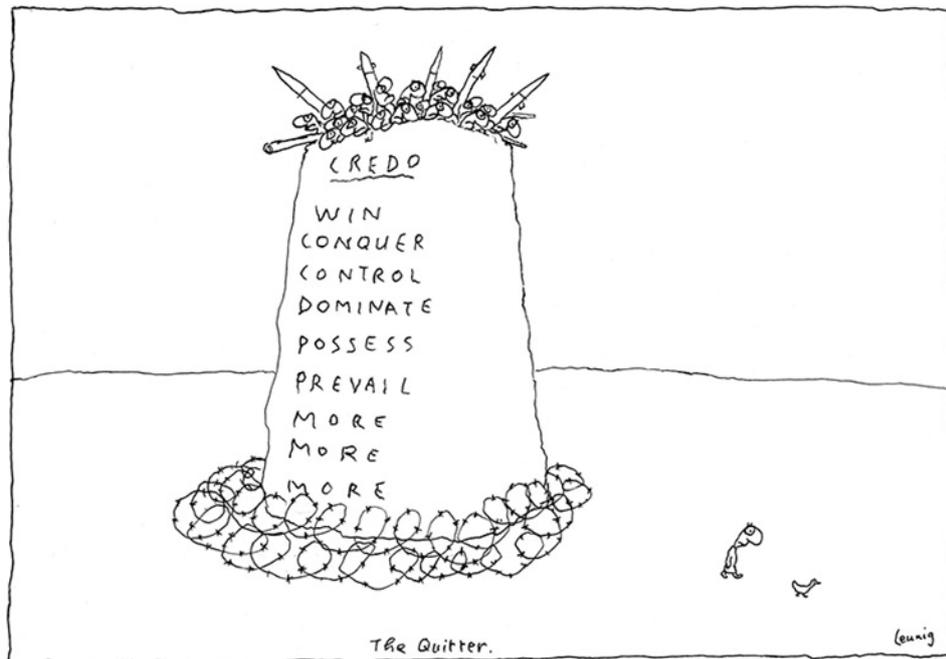


Figure 1 The Quitter (Image courtesy of Michael Leunig).

On reflection, might Leunig have adopted a more optimistic title to highlight the creative possibilities that exist beyond the image of domination, destruction and defeat? Perhaps an equally apt title might be 'The Venturing Fool' or 'The Hopeful Seeker'?

So, why am I applying a creative writing perspective to organisational leadership?

When Commonwealth Bank of Australia (CBA) internal whistle-blower Jeff Morris exposed the actions of 'Dodgy Don', a CBA financial planner who allegedly forged signatures, overcharged fees and created unauthorised investment accounts for his customers without their permission, Morris contributed to setting in motion the 2017 commencement of the Banking Royal Commission. In the eye-witness account of Morris, as quoted in Hooten (2018), it went like this:

I remember going to my first office Christmas party [in 2008]. It was barefoot bowls, and in the middle of it, the managers started yelling, 'Hey, listen up everyone! Don's done it again! He's got an 86-year-old woman to sign up for \$1.6 million and he's charging her 2 per cent up front – \$32,000!' This is for a boiler-plate financial plan produced in an hour. 'Where does he find these little old ladies?! Ring the bell!!!'

Imagine us making \$32,000 for an hour's work, filling out a few 'off the shelf' forms with an unsuspecting 86-year-old. Imagine this is our job. A job supported by our manager, our company, our whole corporate structure. A job for which we will be celebrated professionally and given a bonus. Morris recalled feeling 'like Alice in Wonderland' within weeks of starting at the CBA: 'It was this feeling of, "Am I the only one who thinks this whole thing is just wrong?"' (Hooten 2018). Experiences like those of Morris 'generate affective responses; responses that live on in our flesh, layered as new events unfold that remind the body how it feels to feel' (Pullen, Rhodes & Thanem, 2017, p. 106).

Transcripts of events such as the Banking Royal Commission read like a playscript, with the posturing of interrogators circling their hapless banking-executive prey in the witness box:

Mark Costello, counsel assisting the Royal Commission: You're aware of the fees-for-no-service issues that Commonwealth Bank [CBA] has had?

Executive A of Colonial First State, owned by CBA: Yes, I am.

Costello: And you know that Commonwealth Bank group entities have charged more fees for no service than any other financial services entity in the country; do you know that?

Executive A: I do know that.

Costello: It would be the gold medallist if ASIC [the Australian Securities and Investments Commission] was handing out medals for fees for no service, wouldn't it?

Executive A: Yes.

(Commonwealth of Australia, 2018b, p. 1258).

The brand of genuinely non-fictional organisational stories described above are stories of the 'game' that is played in organisations, on a daily basis, all over the world. This PhD argues that creative writing is a useful vessel for mapping, plotting and giving voice to the protagonists, antagonists, mentors, gatekeepers and bystanders of these stories (see Berry & Batty, 2016), and provides an alternative launching place for examining the phenomenon of organisational leadership.

What follows in this PhD, then, is a relatively unconventional, non-linear examination of organisational leadership through a creative practice research (CPR) lens. Qualitative research

through practice (Hope, 2016), in the form of the fictional *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, has been interwoven throughout the thesis chapters as a 'scriptology' (Rhodes 2018) to work in harmony with the CPR methodology. This approach is based on a cross-disciplinary view that writing is an enquiry method that is central to knowledge creation (Baker 2018; Batty et al. 2017; Rhodes 2018) and specifically, 'that 'sense' in organisation studies can and does exist outside of what sometimes seem to be incontrovertible institutionally powerful confines' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 8).

However, in adopting this approach, it is necessary to engage with unceasingly overlapping topics in the field, as will become apparent as the work unfolds for the reader. A study in leadership encapsulates investigations into social, psychological, economic, artistic, political, scientific and spiritual realms, such as development, ethics, critical leadership studies, leader–follower relations or politics or communication or change management or power and so on. Like a series of rockpools on an ocean beach at low tide, each distinct rockpool takes on a life of its own and proceeds to evolve in its own way. As the processual shift towards high tide takes effect, each separate rockpool becomes awash with the rising tide lapping at its extremities. Boundaries between pools become blurred as inflows and outflows herald the emergence of a disappearing act, appearing then disappearing then reappearing before, finally, disappearing altogether from view as the pools appear to be swallowed by the vast ocean forces. But it is not fixed and 'final'. They have not gone forever and will soon reappear; for now, they merely remain out of sight, still lurking below the surface in a constant state of becoming.

Lost in a fog

As management scholars Jerzy Kociatkiewicz and Monika Kostera observe in their definition of being a textual flâneur:

To be a flâneur means following flows and unobvious pathways, finding doors where walkways close. Textual flânerie, for us, centres on following the poetic, dream thrust of historical texts, rather than focusing on the rational, argument building level, while still embracing their literal, face value meaning. It is attentive yet freely wandering, as can happen in texts just as much as in physical space (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2019, p. 163).

The late 20th century paradigm wars in organisation and management studies saw calls for theoretical diversity in organisation and management studies (Burrell & Morgan, 1979) and the remedy of anomalies in *existing* theories (Kuhn, 1970; Willmott, 1993). Since then, our many decades-long obsession with narrowly viewing our world through a scientific or economic lens has brought significant progress but has also produced the state of turmoil we currently experience in our so-called VUCA world. By resisting the call for balance between science, art and craft in the swirling, sometimes murky waters of organisations and management (Mintzberg, 2005), might we be succumbing to the risk of circling the same buoys as a result of a narrow-focused departure point?

There is a well-known joke about a desperately lost tourist in Ireland who pleads for help from one of the locals for directions to Dublin. The Irishman calmly replies:

‘Well sir, if I were you, I wouldn’t start from here’.

As self-styled ‘free-range philosopher’, Irishman Simon Kidd observes about the ‘lost tourist’ story and its relevance to education:

Being Irish, I can tell that joke with impunity! Indeed, like some others in this category, it’s hard to tell whether the joke is actually racist, since there is something of the ‘Wise Fool’ in the Irishman’s response. After all, if you want to get somewhere, then it’s better to start from a place where you have a good chance of reaching your goal. How does this relate to education? In precisely this way: if your goal is a new way of teaching, then it may be better to start afresh, rather than attempting to tweak a system you have inherited. As Ken Robinson puts it, educational ‘reform’ is simply tinkering with a broken model, when what is required is a revolution (Kidd, 2010, para. 1).

Undertaking PhD research is a challenging, venturing ‘journey’. Undoubtedly, like many others before me, my PhD candidature has been a ‘journey’ in more ways than one. Unwittingly, it commenced over 20 years ago as a middle manager in an Australian Public Service (APS) agency, the Australian Customs and Border Protection Service (Customs). It continued to build through a part-time Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Social Sciences. My BA was completed while also working full-time as a case manager in commercial fraud investigations, leading teams of investigators through target identification, evidence gathering and prosecution of importers in breach of the *Customs Act 1901* related to defrauding the Commonwealth of import duties.

Following the exciting birth of our first child in 1991, my wife, Jane, was pressured to resign by her employer, possibly due to 'out-dated' HR policies? In 1997, when our fourth child arrived, our single-wage growing family steered my PhD journey to a Customs management position at Melbourne International Airport. This position was uniquely rare for managers as it attracted shift-work penalty payments, so provided a much-needed family income supplement. The salary 'bonus' was offset by shared responsibility for 350 staff in the 24 hours per day, seven days per week passenger processing operations. The seismic shift from relatively orderly management of legal cases in a city office to so-called 'people management' in a dynamic hierarchical uniformed command-and-control structure sowed the seeds of the PhD. In the role, an obvious need existed for me to develop leadership programs that validated and encouraged subordinate colleagues to see how they could drive their own culture change. These leadership development initiatives led me to corporate management roles in Human Resource Development, Human Resource Management, National Training Centre management and directorships of National Payroll and Accounts (NPAC) and national business transformation projects.

Throughout all of these management roles, I harboured mixed feelings about being an imposter. Like French philosopher Albert Camus' *L'Étranger* (1982), an outsider – but on the inside of management. A member of the resistance who not only retained his trade union membership secretly but who also actively applied knowledge gained during a Bachelor of Arts degree to the cold hard science of leadership and management practice.

While working full-time in a Customs national training role in Canberra during 2012–13, the PhD 'journey' took another leap forward with full-time enrolment in the Executive Master of Arts (EMA) at the University of Melbourne's Faculty of Arts. My Canberra boss at the time was perplexed: 'An EMA? What is it ... sculpture?' This new program was aimed at 'building a bridge' both from arts to business and from business to arts. A creative artefact that emerged from the EMA was an original play: *The Myth of Themanus – 21st century leadership in action* (Conroy, 2015), an allusion to both *The Myth of Sisyphus* (Camus, 1981) and the 'them-and-us' adversarial nature of the leader–follower dichotomy in organisational life.

Officially my PhD candidature commenced in July 2016 at RMIT University's College of Business (CoB) in Melbourne, Australia, with management scholar and filmmaker Professor Martin Wood as principal supervisor serving on a panel with creative writing scholar Professor Craig Batty and accomplished playwright and dramaturg Dr Noel Maloney. Following the departure

of Martin to the UK for a position at University of Leicester Business School in 2018, a new principal supervisor needed to be found. Perhaps revealingly, RMIT CoB could find no one within its faculty to assume principal supervisory responsibility of a creative–critical research project such as this one. Craig’s generous offer to assume principal supervision responsibility led firstly in 2018 to a change of *schools*, to the RMIT School of Media and Communication. Then in 2019, the ‘journey’ ventured further north to a change of *university* when Craig accepted the Head of Creative Writing position in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the University of Technology Sydney (UTS), and invited Professor of Organisation Studies and Deputy Dean of UTS Business School Carl Rhodes to join him on the supervisory panel.

I am enormously grateful to all four supervisors for their contribution to a non-mainstream research project that is working ‘in the margins’ or, as a former RMIT College of Business professor described it, ‘on the dark side of the moon’. The wicked problem of earnestly trying to land an artistic lunar module on the Sea of (organisational leadership) Tranquility was emphasised for the supervisory panel during mid-2020 final-stage debate about revising the PhD title, with suggestions ranging from ‘A Body of Leaders’ to ‘*The* Body of Leaders’ to ‘Leading Bodies’ to ‘Bleeding Bodies’ and so on. The challenge has been akin to the perplexing challenge of business scholars trying to pin down the definition of ‘leadership’.

It is important to add that I also feel blessed to have enjoyed ‘ten careers’ in one public sector agency, Customs. Customs has a global reach and was an inaugural public service organisation at the Federation of Australia in 1901 (Day, 1996). Prior to its rebranding to Australian Border Force in 2015, Customs held an extensive range of industry/community service responsibilities and provided a truly diverse range of organisational experiences in international trade, shipping, air transport and international mail in tripartite relationship with Australia Post and the Australian Quarantine Inspection Service. It had the Customs marine unit, drug detector dog unit and breeding centre, intelligence, fraud investigations, prosecutions, corporate operations, strategic project management, secondments to the World Customs Organisation (WCO) and overseas branch offices located in numerous Australian embassies. As a public servant collective, the abiding culture has traditionally been one where the *people* of Customs took seriously their role as ‘public servants’, genuinely respecting their responsibilities to industry and the community in their work at the Australian border. There is no intention to denigrate the rich history of Customs in the work that follows.

In summary, what follows is purposely *not* a conventional thesis. Qualitative research through practice (Hope, 2016) in the form of the fictional playscript *Work. Life. Balance.*, interwoven throughout the thesis with a series of personal and professional reflections, is the result of an experimental, reflexive, personal and theoretically informed creative–critical process of incubation.

The dramaturgical process, whereby factual knowledge and personal experience was translated into dramatic fiction [...] was not to set fact against fiction dichotomously, but to provide multiple ways of seeing and thinking about leadership. As events, stories and concepts were structured as dramatic scenes and acts, new ways of considering conflicts, motives, moods, backstories and places emerged. Patterns, images and behaviours crystallised (Conroy et al., 2020, p. 3).

Through creative practice research a broad recontextualization of management may be possible particularly as it relates to the liquid modern era (Bauman, 2009) in which eroding trust in professions, dissipation of social structures, erosion of organizational bonds, dehumanization of the cultural context of organizing have resulted in the fabric of social dynamics being shredded.

The PhD began with a conventional research question related to a ‘quest’ in search of ‘authentic leadership’ in organisations through creative practice research. Despite the temptation for others to dismiss seemingly ‘playful’ creative approaches as trivial or frivolous, it must be stressed that this is an acutely serious endeavour. As organisational change scholar Mark Hughes implores:

We have a limited window of opportunity to learn from the leadership errors of the past decade, if we are to avoid repeating these leadership errors and the considerable damage they do to societies and economies (Hughes, 2016, p. 465).

However, Hughes works in conventional organisational research. As CPR scholar Sophie Hope asserts, conventional research dynamics become complicated in CPR ‘as the question and methodology emerge through making, doing and testing things out’ (Hope, 2016, p. 77). Our departure beckons.





I DEPARTURES

Wave

verb:

1. move one's hand (or something held in one's hand) to and fro in greeting or as a signal.

synonyms: gesture, gesticulate, signal, sign, beckon, indicate, motion, nod, bid, wag, waggle; swing, shake, swish, sweep, swipe, brandish, flourish, flaunt, wield, flick, flutter

"we waved our farewells"

2. move to and fro with a swaying motion while remaining fixed to one point.

synonyms: ripple, flutter, undulate, stir, flap, sway, swing, waft, shake, quiver, oscillate, move; blow

noun:

1. a long body of water curling into an arched form and breaking on the shore.

synonyms: breaker, billow, roller, comber, ripple, white horse, white cap.

2. a sudden occurrence of or increase in a phenomenon, feeling, or emotion.

"the wave of immigration"; "a wave of strikes and resistance"; "a wave of self-doubt"

synonyms: flow, rush, surge, flood, stream, swell, tide, deluge, torrent, spate, billow, surge, rush, ripple, spasm, thrill, frisson, shiver, tingle, stab, dart; upsurge, welling up, outbreak, rash; feeling

3. a gesture or signal made by moving one's hand to and fro.

synonyms: gesture, gesticulation, hand movement; signal, sign, motion, indication

4. a slightly curling lock of hair.

"his hair was drying in unruly waves"

synonyms: curl, kink, corkscrew, crimp, twist, twirl, ringlet, frizz, coil, loop, undulation

5. Physics – a periodic disturbance of the particles of a substance which may be propagated without net movement of the particles, such as in the passage of undulating motion, heat, or sound.

synonyms: ripple, vibration, oscillation, undulation

phrases:

make waves – create a significant impression

wave something aside – dismiss something as unnecessary or irrelevant ...

(Stevenson & Waite, 2011).

Diving-in

In his respected psychology book, *Leaders We Deserve*, Alistair Mant identified the cause of the 'so-called crisis of leadership' as 'too many people, particularly the young, realizing you don't have to obey inadequate authority figures' (Mant, 1998, p. 105).

Mant's primary argument is that 'authority (or crude power masquerading as authority) has no effective sanctions' once people come to the realisation that they do not have to obey. Consequently, office holders turn to 'repression, which leads to authority becoming a "bad object", which discourages good people from seeking office and so on' (Ibid.).

To summarise Mant's argument:

Premise 1: Crude power masquerades as authority.

Premise 2: Reflective people recognise the charade and disobey.

Premise 3: No effective sanctions exist for office holders to utilise.

Premise 4: Office holders turn to repression to assert their authority.

Premise 5: 'Authority' becomes a bad object.

Conclusion: Good people are discouraged from seeking high office.

And so it goes . . .

Questions remain: How do we define 'good people'? And, what is a 'bad object'?

Essentially, my research began in the 1990s as a middle manager in Customs. 'Does it really have to be this way?' became a puzzled mantra swirling around inside my head as I watched and experienced the 'game' playing out between managers and staff. For mystifying reasons that continue to confound, 'the game' appeared to be commanding me, incessantly, to choose one side over another. Despite a 25-year career in management, I maintained a 35-year membership of the Community and Public Sector Union (CPSU) in secrecy, for fear of not being seen as a management team player.

'I don't aspire to a management position,' I said to staff counsellor Carly who was encouraging me to apply for management vacancies.

'That's why you should apply,' she said.

I resisted: 'But I'm not one of these people who covets a management role.'

According to Carly: 'They're precisely the best kind of applicants.'

Development. That is the way to cure Mant's 'crisis of leadership'. Identify the high talent. Invite them to a nice hotel with state-of-the-art conference facilities, a hotel bar, indoor pool and gymnasium. Validate them. Make them feel like a member of the powerful elite. Furnish them with fine wine, quality nourishment of body and mind, a thick folder of current trends in leadership and time-out from their important work schedules to reflect on their special leadership qualities, those unique characteristics that set them apart from their followers.



Canadian Rockies Lake Moraine Reflections. 2019

Reflections
Reflections

The title and accompanying artwork image said it all:

**From Management ...
To Leadership! [1]**



**Figure 2 'Napoleon Crossing the Alps'
(Jacques-Louis David 1802)**

It is 2011, and as a 'high talent' program and potential pathway to an APS Senior Executive Service (SES) position, you can't get much better than this. What a validating experience to be selected as a participant on this coveted five-day leadership development program in Canberra. But what a cause for consternation and morale-lowering lost productivity on the part of those overlooked. A cause for 'reflection' to which we will return in later chapters.

Wobbles

Management does somethin' to people. Ego. Privilege. Power. Gets 'em believing they're somehow more special than everyone else. 'The manager knows best', that's how they think. A 'company of one' with Priority One: self-interest. Anyone who disagrees is wrong, or worse, trouble-makers, in the eyes of management (Victor Nguyen, *Work. Life. Balance*. Act 2 Scene 4).

The contented head wobble and confident business-suited swagger I exhibited every time I wheeled my black cabin bag into the Qantas business lounge on my way to another management meeting or conference was a strangely foreign feeling that seemed to emerge unconsciously. Perhaps it was simply a vulnerable attempt to conform, as if the surrounding atmosphere of the business lounge had seeped into my being. As anthropologist Kathleen Stewart (2007) observes, albeit too late for my distant former self, atmosphere attunement reveals valuable knowledge about the power of ordinary affects. The Qantas lounge was an experience far removed from the direct feedback received on a selection report from a senior manager decades earlier. 'Mr Roberts', as junior staff were compelled to call him, was required to write a comparison between myself and an ambitious colleague known affectionately by his peers as 'The Salesman' (TS). In his rather blunt description, Mr Roberts categorised me dismissively as a person who 'floats downstream' whereas TS has 'the courage to swim against the tide'. Despite the sinking feeling that engulfed me at the time, the jolting feedback and selection failure were in hindsight a blessing.

However, 'a blessing' was not always the most apt description for broader 'leadership development', as nothing much ever seemed to change back in the workplace following development programs. Folders were placed in bottom drawers and business-as-usual resumed. It appeared to me that scepticism-inspired barriers to learning and development in the public sector may induce participant behaviours, even at the most well-meaning development programs, such as:

'hostages' (I'm only here because my boss said I have to be); 'box tickers' (this program is certain to look good on my CV); 'holidaymakers' (nice hotel, great food and wine, all on the departmental/taxpayer account); 'subject matter experts' (others can learn, I'm only here to share my wisdom) (Conroy, 2015, p. 9).

Is it not fair and reasonable for experienced executives who have occupied leadership positions for years to claim: 'we've done leadership'; that is, no further training is required? Might there be other perspectives, other forms, to help us to explore the challenges of leadership and organisational life?

The call for 'new directions' in leadership pedagogy continues unabated amongst organisational leadership scholars:

Put bluntly, the teaching of leadership needs to go beyond a 'rotten apple' theory of dysfunctionality and corruption to examine the barrel within which the apples have soured' (Collinson & Tourish, 2015).

Organisational psychologist, Tammy Tawadros laments 'the paucity of literature on theater-based leadership' development (TBLD), and argues that TBLD is a powerful and innovative experiential learning tool to focus on identity, self-awareness and increasing problem-solving ability to deal with the unexpected and unpredictable (Tawadros, 2015, p. 337). Such learning would appear invaluable in the emergent chaos of a VUCA world.

In 2012–13, throughout a period of public sector management work, business travel and postgraduate EMA study, *The Myth of Themanus – 21st century leadership in action* was created. This creative writing project in the form of a playscript focused on toxic 'them-and-us' organisational tensions, where a mythical ambitious new manager, Themanus, has his plans derailed by a lowly subordinate, Mischievous, who despite having little formal organisational power or authority, is able to employ his significant informal authority as a staff opinion leader to reject and undermine the control of his boss (Conroy 2015). In writing the play, my goal was to 'show not tell' the problematic power dynamics that exist in leadership processes and the organisational risks associated with management hubris. In short, the play was a call to think differently about leadership with a clear intent to *banish the binary* in the quest for AWE (authentic workplace engagement) (Ibid., p. 97).

This PhD takes that work further and deeper. Whilst it considers the use of playscripts and creative writing in business education, it takes a more patient, reflective, embodied, 'not knowing' approach to the emergent process of co-creation with the *becoming* of the creative artefact itself. It also pays greater attention to what organisational scholar Silvia Gherardi describes as 'ordinary affects' (Stewart, 2007) that influence our organisational lives, on both sides of the 'them-and-us' binary. In the performative act of writing, part of my aim was to

examine the framing forces behind such socially constructed dichotomies – which have appeared to me over many years of management and leadership practice to be curiously ‘convenient’ for both sides of the leader–follower binary. *‘There are always reasons why people act the way we do’* was another mantra I clung to while nervously navigating the harsh complexity of ‘people management’. Suspend judgement, try to resist an idealistic moralising focus, remain comfortable being uncomfortable in a not-knowing process of becoming. Respect and listen to your co-creators inside the story. These have been defining features of the PhD, relative to previous work. In doing this, I hoped to potentially evoke an affective response from the reader, too, for their own subjective purpose, in the performative act of reading (Baker, 2018). In other words, to somehow connect and be of service in deepening our understanding regarding the complexity of organisational life, each from within ourselves (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016).

By submitting myself, both body and mind, in this PhD to an experimental ‘way of working that emerges from the incubation of and reflection on a project/practice’ (Sempert et al., p. 206), unexpected insights have revealed themselves. One example of such insights relates to ‘authenticity’ that appeared in my initial research question in 2016 as a focus on ‘authentic leadership’. Through this creative–critical PhD, I have come to the realisation that the work has located itself into a *post-authenticity* world. But more on that will follow. For now, our attention turns to another world – the ‘fictional’ (Schaeffer, 2009) world of the playscript: *Work. Life. Balance.*



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

A Playscript

By Christopher Michael Conroy

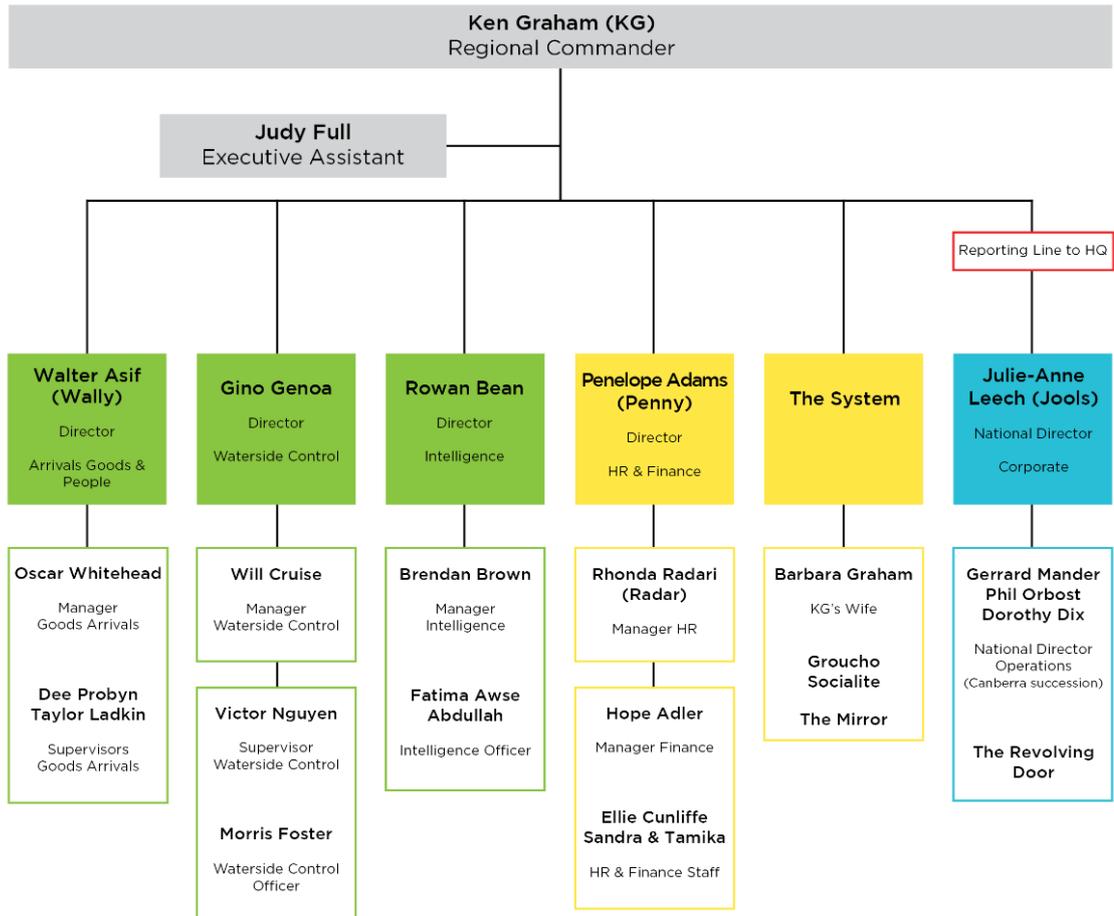


Cast of Characters

Federal Immigration and Border Security (FIBS)

Regional Organisation Chart

- OPERATIONS
- CORPORATE
- CANBERRA



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 1 World

[We are in the regional office of a fictional government public sector agency, Federal Immigration & Border Security (FIBS). Its central office headquarters are located in the national capital, Canberra.]

A spotlight shines on two empty stools at centre stage. Our narrators, two uniformed staff, supervisors DEEANNA (DEE) and TAYLOR from Goods Arrivals Port Security, walk onto the stage and sit quietly on the stools, staring directly towards us. The silence is broken by DEE.]

DEE: I am neither knowledgeable nor ignorant.

[DEE and TAYLOR sit quietly, staring straight ahead into the audience for an extended period.]

Sometimes I drive.

Sometimes I drift.

Sometimes I drown.

[Pause.]

I am neither leader nor follower.

[Pause.]

Drive. Drift. Drown.

[Pause.]

I am neither captive nor free.

[A musical piece, Walk on the Water by Australian singer/songwriter Richard Clapton begins playing. On a large screen behind them, to the right, the FIBS Port Security Command Centre signage is replaced by a series of scrolling images:

a rolling sea; waves crashing into the base of rocky, impenetrable escarpments; surfers cruising on an orderly set; hand-carved timber canoes; tall ships at full sail; black-and-white images of migrant ships (Greeks, Italians, 'ten pound Poms'); cruise liners

squeezing under Sydney Harbour Bridge; winged keels; sports cruisers; leaky wooden boats; the Australian Federal Parliament House; VUCA (Volatility. Uncertainty. Complexity. Ambiguity.) in organisations; spiritual images of a Christ-like figure walking on water; heavily laden container ships; 'high-rise' container stacks on wharves; a single red tanker floating on the horizon between sea and sky; stormy, threatening seas ...]



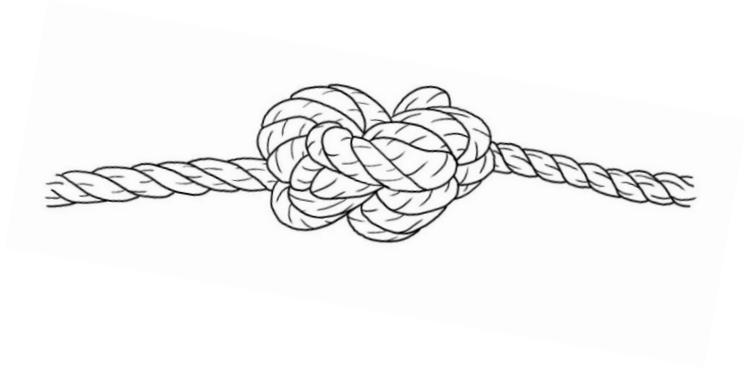
VUCA World: Volatility. Uncertainty. Complexity. Ambiguity.

Accompanying music: *Walk on the Water* (Richard Clapton, 1982):

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TB_5quXz-w

*Walk on the water
You can reach the dry land,
Walk on the water
And hold it in your hands ...
Sometimes I know I think too much,
I think so much, I just lose touch,
With whatever's going down today;
But I have seen so many of you,
Walking on the water,
And I know where it is I want to be –
Walking out there with you on the sea ...*





II UNDULATIONS

Everyone who tells a story tells it differently, just to remind us that everybody sees it differently. Some people say there are true things to be found, some people say all kinds of things can be proved. I don't believe them. The only thing for certain is how complicated it all is, like string full of knots. It's all there but hard to find the beginning and impossible to fathom the end.

Jeanette Winterson (1985) *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

Protection

Public services are never better performed than when their reward comes in consequence of their being performed, and is proportioned to the diligence employed in performing them ...

Every man is left perfectly free to pursue his own interest in his own way.

- Adam Smith (1776) *The Wealth of Nations*

How selfish soever man may be supposed, there are evidently some principles in his nature, which interest him in the fortune of others, and render their happiness necessary to him, though he derives nothing from it, except the pleasure of seeing it.

- Adam Smith (1761) *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*

Adam Smith (1723–90) was the son of a Customs man and is widely regarded as 'the father of modern economics' (Schwartz, 2015). He was born only months after the death of his own father, Adam Smith, Senior, a lawyer and Commissioner of Customs in Scotland, and was raised lovingly by his widowed mother Margaret (Norberg, 2016).

When I joined 'Customs' it was named the Department of Business and Consumer Affairs, Bureau of Customs, and its primary use of the word 'protection' related to trade tariff protection – Customs Tariff and Valuation to protect the Australian manufacturing sector.

The bounty to the white-herring fishery is a tonnage bounty; and is proportioned to the burden of the ship, not to her diligence or success in the fishery; and it has, I am afraid, been too common for vessels to fit out for the sole purpose of catching, not the fish, but the bounty.

- Adam Smith (1776) *The Wealth of Nations*.

Two key industry beneficiaries of tariff protection were the textile clothing and footwear industry and the passenger motor vehicle industry. At its peak in 1984–5, Australian government assistance to the former had blown out from 39 per cent in 1974–5 to 75 per cent; and for passenger motor vehicle and parts from 54 per cent to 143 per cent (Richardson 1997). Assistance included a Customs tariff rate of 57.5 per cent, import quota restrictions and government subsidies (Brett, 2020).

In short, to import an *out-of-quota* passenger motor vehicle into Australia in 1984–5, an importer was required to pay a 100 per cent tariff based on the Customs Value (CV) of the vehicle being imported, e.g. a luxury car valued at A\$100,000 attracted Australian Customs duty of A\$100,000, increasing the value of the vehicle as it entered home consumption in Australia to \$200,000 plus sales tax, freight and other on-costs.

As a rich man is likely to be a better customer to the industrious people in his neighbourhood than a poor, so is likewise a rich nation. [Trade restrictions,] by aiming at the impoverishment of all our neighbours, tend to render that very commerce insignificant and contemptible.

- Adam Smith (1776) *The Wealth of Nations*

Trade liberalisation policies introduced by the Hawke and Keating Labor governments in the 1980s resulted in the phasing out of tariffs and the creation of free trade agreements between cooperating nations. This turn towards a globalised economy resulted in the demise of local manufacturing industries such as the car industry. Indeed, the last Australian-built car rolled off the General Motors Holden assembly line in 2017. In effect, this event in the category of so-called ‘creative destruction’ first theorised by Austrian political economist Joseph Schumpeter (1994 [1942]), not only changed the lives of people in the manufacturing and import/export sectors and the lives of consumers in the markets they serviced, but also fundamentally disrupted the lives of public servants employed to regulate those industries. The economic changes seeped into the mass consciousness of Australians over a 30-year slow burn.

In the interim, a more sudden and significant event changed the global landscape.

On 11 September 2001, I was working as a manager with Customs at Melbourne Airport’s International Terminal Building when breaking news of terrorist attacks in the US was being broadcast. Distressed passengers disembarking flights from the US – who were in the air as the terrorist attacks occurred in New York, Washington and Pennsylvania – were catching up with

the tragic news and fielding frantic phone messages from loved ones. As we watched the TV screens in horror, witnessing heartrending scenes of desperate people jumping out of the 80th floor of the burning, exploding World Trade Centre towers, a Customs management colleague turned to me and said, 'This will be great for [Customs] business'.

Trade tariff protection had been replaced by border protection.

'Whether we play the game or not, it is being played with us. Whatever we do or abstain from doing, our withdrawal will change nothing' (Anders, 1959, cited in Bauman, 2009, p. 262). Fifty years after Anders, 'we hear the same concerns expressed about "the game", although they may differ in their descriptions of 'that world which plays games with us, compelling us by the same token to play the make-believe game of "free" players ...' (Ibid.). Bauman asserts that all of these concerns struggle with a similar paradox:

the greater our individual freedom, the less it is relevant to the world in which we practice it. The more tolerant the world becomes of the choices we make, the less the game, our playing of it, and the way we play it are open to our choice (Ibid.).

Puzzling questions remain. Who makes the rules of 'the game'? Who has the power to lead us in it? Were the powerful preordained to leadership authority? How might they defend their authority and using what forms of *protection*?

Knots

Creative writing scholars Craig Batty and Donna Lee Brien support the argument of Nigel Krauth (2011) that the creative writing exegesis has metamorphosed from a critical journal of reflections on the creative process, to a parallel text, to an interwoven creative-critical plaited text (Batty & Brien, 2017).

In keeping with the metaphor of knots and rope, it is important to be clear from the outset (although it has taken me several years of critical reading and reflection to come to the realisation) that the fundamental focus of my work, as it relates to scholarly fields in leadership, organisational behaviour, management, business ethics, organisational aesthetics, *inter alia*, is less centred on the 'leadership' rope as an entire whole. My research is less immersed in the strands that constitute the rope and the various layers of yarn that form each strand. Rather, it relates to a humble, single fibre as a minor component of the completely

formed rope (refer Figure 3). Despite its lowly minoritarian status, the fibre, as a primary, core constituent of the rope, warrants serious attention on ‘the maintenance schedule’ of organisational life. My work operates on the margins, in a scratchy messy artistic/aesthetic sandpit within the vast mainstream instrumentalism of an organisational ocean that organisational leaders seek to comprehend, tame, govern and control.

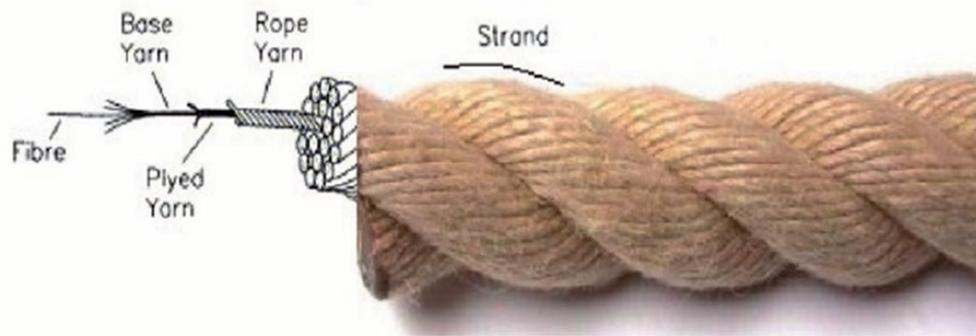


Figure 3 The organisational rope (Toda et al., 2016, p. 1283)

Organisation scholar Nelson Phillips (1995) employed a two-by-two quadrant management theorising schema to examine the types of text commonly produced by organisational researchers in their hypotheses about how organisations function (refer Figure 4). Phillips’s theorising progresses from non-narrative fiction in quadrant 1 to quantitative non-narrative non-fiction in quadrant 2 to the study of narrative non-fiction organisational cases in quadrant 3. He labels the 4th quadrant with a question mark due to the underrepresented genres of narrative fictions such as ‘short stories, novels, poems, songs, and plays’ (Phillips, 1995, p. 630).

	Non-Narrative	Narrative
Non-Fiction	Survey Data Laboratory Data Content Analysis	Biographies Case Studies Ethnographies
Fiction	Theories Mathematical Models Typologies	?

Figure 4 Narrative vs Fictional Approaches to Organisational Analysis

Extending the idea with a similar but more comprehensive two-by-two quadrant management theorising approach for detailing the field of organisation aesthetics, theorists Steven Taylor and Hans Hansen (2005) identify the tension between instrumental/intellectual work and

artistic/aesthetic work, claiming: ‘Aesthetic forms of expression are like experiments that allow us to reconsider and challenge dominant categories and classifications [...] [they] not only transform organizations, but the lenses we use to view them’ (Taylor & Hansen, 2005, p. 1216).

In the organisational aesthetics research categories that they describe, Taylor and Hansen identify the tension between instrumental/intellectual work and artistic/aesthetic work (2005, p. 1217). Refer Figure 5 below.

		CONTENT	
		Instrumental	Aesthetic
METHOD	Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Artistic forms as metaphors for organisations *Lessons for management from arts *Arguments for the importance of organisational aesthetics *Using aesthetics to deepen our understanding of traditional organisational topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Industries and products fundamentally aesthetic in nature *Aesthetic forms in organisations *The direct sensory experience of day-to-day reality in organisations
	Artistic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Artistic forms used to work with individual issues *Artistic forms used to work with organisational issues *Aesthetic forms used to illustrate/present intellectual arguments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> *Artistic forms used to present the direct sensory day-to-day experience in organisations

Figure 5 Categories of organisational aesthetics research (Taylor & Hansen, 2005)

Regarding the Taylor and Hansen (2005) grid, the research I am presenting in this PhD is situated in the relatively under-researched fourth quadrant, where artistic–aesthetic forms such as playwriting are employed to present commonplace embodied experience in organisations. Through the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.*, the direct sensory lived experience of organisational members at the fictional Federal Immigration and Border Security (FIBS) agency is presented. This includes the *minutiae* of organisational life at FIBS; the often unseen,

unheard, unrecognised moments where the atmosphere attunement to ordinary affects espoused by Stewart (2007) surfaces, and where various fields of organisational study, including workplace leadership, can manifest in plots, characters and other narrative devices that explore the same themes (Conroy & Batty, 2019).

Ripples

For philosopher Erin Manning (2016), thinking is always out of sync with itself. Consequently, it needs to remain lithe, adaptive, thickening ‘in its encounter with the futurity that orients it’ (Manning, 2016, p. ix). According to Manning, it is ‘a minor gesture’ to bring tremulous thought into contact with its limit; to be less concerned with the certainty of form that knowledge takes and more open to the germinating, emergent *force* of form, the ‘force of the as-yet-unformed coursing through it’ (Ibid., p. x). This is a force for freedom, although not necessarily with independent volition. As Henri Bergson and others (2007) maintain, the more typical definition of freedom has us standing outside of an act; rationally orienting an act because we have agency and control, ‘we give a mechanical explanation of a fact, and then substitute the explanation for the fact itself’ (Bergson et al., 2007, p. 181). The *force* of form is an ally of language in the making, ‘defined by its capacity to vary, not to hold, not to contain’ (Manning, 2016, p. 24). For freedom is to be found not in the linear ordering and measuring of experience ‘but in the dynamic intensity of the event’s unfolding’ (Ibid., p. 24–5). It is in the ‘aesthetic yield’, the in-act of the more-than ‘where the force of form remains emergent’ (Ibid., p. 13) that scholars and practitioners may hear the rich heterogeneity of the noncontinuous nature of experience (Ibid., p. 25).

As Manning observes: ‘This involves becoming more attuned to event-time, the non-linear lived duration of experience in the making. For it is in event-time that the minor gesture tunes the event to what it can do’ (Ibid., p. 15). The mantra ‘There are reasons why we humans act the way we do’ continues swirling in my mind as it has done for decades of nervous, sometimes *tremulous*, navigation through the experience of management in a designated ‘leadership’ position. Suspend judgement. Remain open to not-knowing. Language in the making of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript has been aided by the germinating, emergent *force* of form, in the ripples that involuntarily crept into the crypt of body and mind by day and surreptitiously seeped into sleep at night. ‘It’s all been done before,’ said one professor at a leading Australian university, as we met to discuss *The Myth of Themanus* and related research

possibilities. 'There is no new knowledge to be found in organisational leadership studies except perhaps in organisational aesthetics'.

Attempting to pin down the elusive definition of leadership has long been a focus of scholars. This PhD research is located within one small subset of the relational perspective – dealing with artistic–aesthetic sensibilities – within the broader relational leadership discourse that emanated from the larger continuous discourse in the leadership field. By viewing leadership through this lens new forms of understanding may emerge through the tiny fissures of a minor gesture (Manning 2016), ripples that shift conventional relational leadership language and practice into a reinvented use. Regarding the larger continuous discourse in the field, differentiations have been made between leaders and managers (Bennis & Nanus, 1985; Kotter, 1995; Zaleznik, 1977). Generally, the former have been categorised as being preoccupied with rationality, order, control and relating to followers in impersonal bureaucratic ways, whereas the latter have been characterised as being more intuitive, more tolerant of a degree of disorder and more inclined to relate with followers in personal and direct ways (Gabriel, 2013). The general tendency among leadership scholars has been to elevate the motivation of 'leaders' to being more personally connected to others around them, more compassionate, even altruistic, in terms of having personal traits that attract followers, including traits such as authenticity.

The approach of basing research on individual leaders inspiring individual followers 'to go beyond their self-interests to concerns for their group or organization' (Bass & Avolio, 1997, p. 202) lends itself to automatic assumptions about the motivation of leaders and prompts serious questions to be raised, such as:

- Who is responsible for inspiring leaders to go beyond their own self-interest?
- Should we merely assume that leaders, having found their way into a managerial leadership title, will always maintain an authentic primary focus of 'concerns for their group or organization' at the expense of their own self-interest?
- Must leadership be leader-centred or can so-called 'followers' be leaders too?

Inflow and outflow

I will examine more recent organisational leadership literature in future chapters. This chapter introduces the perspective of a relatively small group of management scholars who seek to reconceptualise the leadership field, before situating this within more conventional relational leadership theory; and then expands the relevance of the perspective to both leadership and creative practice research.

One management scholar who questions why the majority of leadership theories has remained leader-centred is filmmaker Martin Wood (2005, 2018). Wood sought a new way of conceiving leadership beyond the binary approaches by scholars such as Stogdill (1950), Blake and Mouton (1964), Fiedler (1967), Hersey and Blanchard (1977), Burns (1978), Bass, Avolio and Goodheim (1987), Heifetz (1994) and Rickards (1999). The various approaches to leadership by such scholars have included individual leaders' personal qualities and style; leader–follower transactional models based on individual follower maturity; the adaptive leadership response; and transformational leadership where leaders try to change organisational culture as distinct from transactional leaders that work within the existing culture (Wood, 2005).

Wood promoted a new approach based primarily on a relational understanding, concluding that:

The notion of leadership does not, therefore, refer specifically or exclusively to the transformational, charismatic or visionary figure of transcendent leaders, nor does it focus entirely on the behaviour of followers, or the discrete relations between one or the other, which leave the relations external to each other (Wood, 2005, p. 1118).

Appropriating Deleuze and Guattari (1987) and their concept of 'involution' – to express a relaxation of natural, obvious and reified forms in favour of emergent novel alliances that cut across and beneath seemingly independent social actors – Wood prioritises 'emergence and becoming' above sheer existence or being (Wood 2005). Referencing process metaphysics, Wood espouses the 'interconnectedness' of Whitehead (1967b) and the 'mutual penetration' of Bergson (1921) to conclude that concrete things such as leaders, followers and organisations are 'surface effects':

They are simple appearances we employ to give substantiality to our experience, but under whose supposed 'naturalness' the fundamentally processual nature of the real is neglected (Wood, 2005, p. 1104).

The notion of ‘supposed naturalness’ – seemingly concrete things but mere ‘surface effects’ – is at the heart of the relational and what may be considered as *the authentic* in this PhD. This is important in terms of the ‘lived experience’ contribution creative practice can make for leadership studies. In the process metaphysics espoused by Wood (2005; 2018), authenticity is reality itself but expressed as a fluid concept as distinct from a static abstraction of logic. It cannot be communicated via theories or concepts but must be directly lived. What we call inauthentic is merely a certain view of the same thing; it simply denotes the presence of a form of the same authenticity that does not interest or appeal to us, i.e. authentic (good) or inauthentic (bad). To use another example, the case of order (good) and disorder (bad) in practical terms, where the actual presence of authenticity, or order, superimposes on its perceived absence.

If authenticity, or order, is better denoted as directly lived experience as distinct from static abstractions of logic, then this PhD argues that the lived experience of a creative practice event can offer insights that have been previously hidden to leadership studies. As Silvia Gherardi (2017) highlights when detailing the *Cruel Optimism* workplace story of Lauren Berlant, it is the embodied subjective, lived experience of the writer, reader or viewer – the feeling through our bodily senses in the moment – that drives both our relational response to the experience and consequently the processual internal relation which follows that, and so on. It is my contention that a similar experience of internal relation can occur in the performative act of writing, reading or viewing a creative work, including a playscript in this PhD such as *Work. Life. Balance*. Through this experience, the force of form that creates a tiny fissure, a ripple or a crack, which will be examined in later sections of the PhD, has the potential to produce subtle change in leadership, management and organisational research and practice.

Streams

Organisation scholar Mary Uhl-Bien has been a leading figure in more conventional approaches to leadership such as Relational Leadership Theory (RLT) (Uhl-Bien 2006), Complexity Leadership Theory (CLT) (Uhl-Bien et al. 2007) and leadership for organisational adaptability (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018). While not following the process metaphysics espoused by Martin Wood, Mark Dibben and others, her work in RLT has some parallels. Uhl-Bien differentiates between an entity perspective that focuses on the attributes of individuals while engaging in

interpersonal relationships, and a relational perspective that sees leadership as a process of social construction through which understandings of leadership emerge and receive privileged ontology. Appropriating the work of management and organisation professor Arja Ropo (2005) while following the relational thread in pursuit of aesthetic perspectives such as the body as a source of knowing lived experiences and sensuous perceptions, Uhl-Bien considers how the relationship looks and feels, the extent to which it appeals to both conscious and unconscious aesthetic sensibilities (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 672). In her more recent work, Arja Ropo and leadership scholar Perttu Salovaara expand these ideas in keeping with the recent stream of research on the materiality of organising by conceptualising leadership as a sociomaterial relationship between human and space (Ropo & Salovaara 2019).

Prior to more recent developments, Denis, Langley and Sergi (2012) provided a comprehensive summary of the field, particularly as it relates to forms of leadership that imply plurality and relationality. In the review, four streams of scholarship are identified: (Stream 1) sharing leadership in teams, (Stream 2) pooling leadership at the top of organisations, (Stream 3) spreading leadership across boundaries over time, and (Stream 4) producing leadership through interaction. The work of Wood (2005) and Uhl-Bien (2006) is classified by Denis et al. in Stream 4 together with the process and practice-based conception of leadership of Crevani et al. (2010), and the linking of ethical and moral concerns to dialogue and intersubjectivity of Cunliffe and Eriksen (2011) (Denis et al., 2012, pp. 256–64). In limiting the metaphorical threads on the organisational rope, Stream 4 literature has the closest conceptual alignment to this PhD. It informs the research methodology by connecting dialogue and intersubjectivity to Cunliffe's concern for surfacing the 'ethicomoral' pressures faced by leaders (Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011, p. 1446). Such pressures can range from a toxic organisational culture exposed in a Royal Commission or the experience of an ostracised whistle-blower as detailed in the introduction, to other more subtle workplace examples of power abuse where people in the workplace either know of ethical, regulatory or legal breaches and ignore them, pay insufficient attention to notice or choose to 'not know'. A focus on these ethicomoral pressures enables a connection to be made with Manning's minor gesture that 'moves the nonconscious toward the conscious', making felt the 'unsayable in the said' (Manning, 2016, p. 7). As will be argued in subsequent chapters, it is the contention of this PhD that the use of creative artefacts, such as the *Work. Life. Balance. Playscript*, can be of valuable assistance in surfacing these pressures.

In 'advocating a relational, reflexive and situated approach in which self is always in-relation to, and ethically-responsible for, others', Cunliffe (2009) pulls together the separate yet 'inevitably and irrevocably entwined' three threads of relationality, moral activity and critical-reflexivity. The latter's capacity to examine and unsettle our assumptions, actions and their impacts (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 94) invites a minor gesture, such as a creative practice artefact, as a potential means to enrich relational understanding and create the subtle, unsettling disturbances that may produce change.



Reflections
Reflections

Walking the talk

In 2009 I was invited to be the national project director of the Customs and Border Protection People and Place Transformation project (PPT), conducted between 2009 and 2011 as a result of core business budget pressures caused partly by the increasing arrivals of suspect irregular entry vessels (SIEVs), which are clandestine maritime vessels seeking to illegally transport asylum seekers into Australia. It was during this project that the need to conduct research in the area of this PhD became confirmed in my mind. The PPT project aim was to introduce a new corporate operating model in the Human Resources and Facilities Management (Property) workforce, a workforce with low morale and a poor service reputation. From a starting point in 2009 of approximately 500 corporate staff (not including Finance and IT) servicing a workforce of 5000 client-facing core business Customs staff, the project aim was to reduce corporate staffing levels to 268 by July 2010. This transformational change to the corporate operating model involved no actual job losses; however, displaced staff were redeployed to frontline Customs core business activities.

Following a successful implementation of the new operating model and shared services centre by the PPT project team, the next stage of the project in 2011 aimed at embedding the new operating model. This included a people capability development component that resulted in the piloting of a visible workplace artefact – a small utility box for office stationery, tissues, etc.

– to sit on desks and ledges in the workspaces of team leaders, supervisors and managers. One small section of the artefact displayed text developed by the project team in consultation with stakeholders: ‘People are our most valuable asset. How have I shown our people that they are valued today?’

Two senior executive service (SES) officers separately directed me to have these words removed.

For the Canberra-based SES officer, Boris, the request was quite elementary:

‘We don’t refer to people as “assets” anymore. Modern management theory uses more progressive terms now.’

When asked innocently what terms are used now, Boris replied:

‘Human capital.’

The Melbourne-based SES officer who objected to the offending phrase was my direct supervisor, Tonia, with whom I enjoyed a healthy, good-humoured relationship. With a hint of urgency in her widening eyes and an awkward smile, she explained her concern regarding the phrase ‘people are our most valuable asset’ as follows:

‘Get it off there! Staff and the union have been criticising us for years about those words, calling management “hypocrites” for mouthing the words but then treating staff poorly.’

Tonia agreed wholeheartedly when I suggested she was saying that management detractors believe that we (management) don’t ‘walk the talk’.

‘YEEES!’ she replied, ‘EXACTLY! Don’t give them the ammunition!’

But she appeared bemused when queried about the essence of what she was directing:

‘You do realise what you are suggesting, don’t you, Tonia? Rather than management responding to criticism by actually and authentically “walking the talk”, you are saying that we (management) should stop “talking the talk”’.

She replied, with a more relaxed, knowing and collegiate smile:

‘Just get it off there please, Chris. I don’t have time for the headaches it will cause.’

Erosion

Ring the bells that still can ring
Forget your perfect offering
There is a crack, a crack in everything
That's how the light gets in

- *Anthem*, Leonard Cohen (1992)

'The laboratory of the possible' is how Henricks (2006) describes the art or practice of play:

To play fully and imaginatively, is to step sideways into another reality, between the cracks of ordinary life. Although the ordinary world, so full of cumbersome routines and responsibilities, is still visible to us, its images, strangely, are robbed of their powers (Henricks, 2006).

'Soft' skills are what university vice-chancellors and business leaders are ordering for the future employment of our youth and the prosperity and/or survival of businesses operating in a disruptive, rapidly changing, technology-advancing economic environment of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity: a globalised 'VUCA world' (Arkenberg 2019; Bakshi 2017; Fleming et al. 2018). British engineering business management scholars Ayat Saleh and Richard Watson include a 'business excellence' prefix to expand the acronym to 'BEVUCA' in order to commence 'a structured management solution' to VUCA-world problems (Saleh & Watson, 2017, p. 706).

Writing in the context of the turn to play – the increasing call to loosen the constraints of academic research to explore broader perspectives with a view to expanding possibilities – Julienne van Loon (2014) laments the plight of academic researchers burdened by the limiting overemphasis on scientific economic perspectives, 'the Fordist/Taylorist approach to knowledge measurement and knowledge acquisition' in institutions that are 'so pre-occupied with performance measurement and the complexities of federal government reporting, that they forget to let their researchers out to play' (van Loon, 2014, para. 25). She argues that 'university management and higher education policy makers need to recognise the value of, and sit more comfortably with, uncertainty, contingency, possibility if they are genuinely interested in fostering innovation in research' (Ibid., para. 27). As detailed throughout this PhD, creative practice research fundamentally endeavours to sit comfortably with uncertainty.

In terms of Henrick's experimental play in the laboratory of the possible, as playwright Steve Taylor (2018) asserts, an experimental play(script) is a 'not knowing' creative endeavour.

While there is merit in the sentiment of van Loon's account – indeed, the nature of this thesis almost epitomises it – one potential gap in her account is that it is taken from the perspective of a creative writing practitioner/researcher/teacher burdened by management rules and her primary focus is on the implications for researchers such as herself striving for innovation and impact despite many obstacles. The point does get highlighted that as a teacher van Loon encourages her 'creative writing students to strive to produce new writing that sits between rules and their absence' because this is 'where the best and most original new work really comes to life' (Ibid.). However, might van Loon's account be enhanced by a broader consideration of who comprises the body of 'university management and higher education policy makers', including those with a Master of Business Administration (MBA) or other business management degrees, and how *their* experiences as students might influence the outcomes that their work produces?

As one example to demonstrate the point, course guides such as the Master of Tertiary Education Management (University of Melbourne, 2020) contain curriculum content related to risk management, quality management, audits, institutional governance, science, technology and innovation, leading and managing research but give little, if any, attention to arts-based practice, experimental play and the so-called 'soft' skills that are in demand. Indeed, such course guides read more like the epitome of controlled, structured management solutions espoused in BEVUCA (Saleh & Watson, 2017).

The need to pay closer attention to the influence of business or management education on the managerial approach that graduates adopt in their careers is important to the lives of people impacted by organisational leadership. Such attention not only relates to van Loon's 'university management and higher education policy makers' but to the resultant organisational culture, values and ethics of all organisations who recruit business and management graduates. This is where I contend that the addition of arts-based creative practice to management education can provide greater balance and substance to the education of future managers in organisations. An approach that seeks to juxtapose two distinctly differing approaches to university education might help to transform the 'rules of the game' Fox-Kirk (2017) with the aim of building some form of bridge between them. However, it is not only the course curriculum that would benefit from a more balanced perspective.

Despite acknowledging that doing an MBA does not necessarily make someone ‘mercenary’, management scholar Henry Mintzberg (2005) argues that MBA programs ‘do attract a disproportionate share of people with these characteristics – impatient, aggressive, self-serving – and then fast tracks [them] to positions of influence in society’ (Mintzberg, 2005, p. 92). These would appear to be people with the same characteristics as *Leaders We Deserve* author Alistair Mant refers to when describing the ‘raider’ type as opposed to the ‘builder’ type in his binary versus ternary theory (Mant, 1983, p. 9). Business management education has a major role to play in the management and leadership outcomes that take place on a day-to-day basis in organisations; this PhD hopes to at least contribute to broadening the discourse towards a broader, more balanced management and leadership development offering.

In 2016, as I embarked on this PhD, I also commenced sessional teaching in the Australian university sector in subjects such as organisational theory, human resource management, creative innovation and design, introduction to management, workplace health safety and wellbeing, managing people, and management in practice.

Schools of management – themselves organisations in a ‘VUCA’ world – in transition, responding to disruption; striving for continuous improvement; attempting to match the expectations of government, industry, clients (students and in some cases their fee-paying parents); driving transformational change to better integrate university education with future careers in globalised workplaces; continuously and innovatively building its brand; proactively expanding export markets; seeking to attract the best talent to produce tomorrow’s captains of industry and create an alumni of which it could be proud (not to mention use in marketing campaigns); partnering, performing, prospering, proliferating, producing, profiting.

Organisational leadership scholars David Collinson and Dennis Tourish (2015) argue for new directions in leadership pedagogy to include the emergent field of critical leadership theory (CLS) that reconceptualises the importance of followers’ agency, in particular how follower behaviours impact leader behaviours and vice versa (Collinson & Tourish, 2015, p. 588). CLS holds that leadership fundamentally relates to ‘the effective, or ineffective exercise of power, authority and influence (Ibid., p. 577).

How might a university best prepare current management students for future business excellence in a VUCA world?

Would a sample of a lecture transcript, such as the one below and in Figure 6, be an example of the business excellence we desire?

Dateline: March 2019 – Lecture to management undergraduates in Australia

UNIVERSITY LECTURER:

41:34 You need to be able to show empathy ... which is ... develop your feminine side.

41:38 You need, as a manager – no matter what you’re feeling – you need to *maintain the aspect of* (my emphasis) being non-judgemental, so people will tell you stuff!

41:48 You need that information from people. If you’re non-judgemental and empathic, *people will come and tell you EVERYTHING* (lecturer emphasis), which is very useful.

UNIVERSITY XYZ WEEK 4
THE CHALLENGE OF MANAGERIAL COMMUNICATION

**LEADING TEAMS:
WHAT GLOBAL COMMUNICATION SKILLS ARE REQUIRED?**

1. Tolerance for ambiguity
2. Behavioural flexibility
3. Goal orientation
4. Sociability and interest in other people
5. Empathy
6. Non-judgemental

Stahl (2001)

*“You need to show **empathy** ... which is ... develop your feminine side ...”*

*“You need, as a manager, no matter what you’re feeling, you need to **maintain the aspect of** being non-judgemental, so people will tell you stuff!”*

*“You need that information from people. If you’re non-judgemental and empathic, **people will come and tell you EVERYTHING**, which is very useful . . .”*

Figure 6 Lecture slide, fictional university XYZ

In other words, a manager needs to *appear* to have empathy and be non-judgemental for a functional managerial purpose: so that people, *including people over whom you have power*, will tell you everything and hide nothing from you. The tendency towards the organisational

hypocrisy to which Brunsson (2002) refers, where organisations or managers act contrary to their talk, is apparent. There are many possible reasons why a lecturer might choose the words they have chosen in this lecture, such as trying to appease the (possibly falsely) perceived preferences of their young audience; genuinely trying to emphasise the self-protection required for managers who might experience people withholding information (perhaps through a lack of trust in management); or simply a poor choice of words or phrasing. However, to what degree might those 'being managed' feel betrayed when they discover that the empathy they thought they were being shown by their manager was merely a façade designed to get them to reveal everything to their boss? In their study of the significant links between sociologist Zygmunt Bauman's theories and organisation theory, management scholars Jerzy Kociatkiewicz and Monika Kostera identify the façade and examine possible causes related to what Bauman (2000) describes as 'liquid modernity' as opposed to the 'solid modernity' that preceded it (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2014). At the very heart of Bauman's 'liquid modernity' (2000) lies the volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of the VUCA world, a disruptive, unstable time that Bauman describes as an interregnum:

Times of interregnum are ... times of uncertainty ... a time when rulers no longer can rule and the ruled no longer wish to be ruled; institutional disparity, the future of migrants and the durability of the planet (Bauman, 2012, p. 51).

In such times, Bauman argues that a process of adiaphorization occurs which involves organisational members on both sides of the leader-follower binary morally distancing themselves from their actions and choices (Bauman & Donskis, 2013) creating the façade to which Kociatkiewicz and Kostera, (2014) refer.

To what extent might this management attitude or façade contribute to the erosion of trust in organisational relationships? What might be the effect on the victim recipient of such behaviour, for example a whistle-blower or victim of unethical behaviour exposed in an anticorruption investigation or Royal Commission? To shift the focus from major events such as a Royal Commission down to simple ordinary effects in organisational life, I align with Susan Finley that the messy, non-tidied aspects of work enable a different perspective to emerge that allows an access to the heart of the matter, a turn from the global to the local, from political to personal and from the pedagogical to the performative (Finley, 2018, p. 562)

As an experimental method for viewing the local, personal and performative to which Susan Finley refers, the use of creative practice research within this PhD was a choice designed to

help surface the *minutiae* in organisations that often contribute to unrecognised forces. Not only does it build upon the creative work completed in my executive master of arts degree, it also answers the call by scholars for new 'scriptologies' in organisation studies (Rhodes, 2018) and Australian Federal Government Chief Scientist Dr Alan Finkel's appeal for more stories (Finkel 2016). Writing in the Journal of Management Development, UK business school scholars Kerrie Fleming, Carla Millar and Vicki Culpin support the call by Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2015) for:

[A] humanisation of leadership to stimulate behaviours which are more sympathetic to the context of leaders and managers, turbulent or otherwise, reducing reliance on current business school textbook approaches to leadership (Fleming et al., 2018, p. 607).

This PhD argues that this is precisely where creative practice research, in the form of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, can provide a viable response to the call.

It is important to note that 'creative practice research is a combination of creative and critical elements, not one plus the other' (Lee et al., 2015). The shift is away from binary positions of one or the other towards a coexistence that strives for balance, harmony and completeness. Similarly, Harris and Holman Jones (2016) reject the view that performance is embodied and writing is merely a record of the event and 'asserts that writing and performance are two arms on the same body [...] writing is equally a physical practice [...] a making practice, a creative practice, a critical practice' (Harris & Holman Jones, 2016). The inadequacy of a purely scientific perspective has been highlighted by leadership and management scholars and philosophers alike, despite the disparate focus of their work.

For example, Deleuze and Guattari (1994) argue that science, art and philosophy have a different focus regarding understanding and knowledge yet have always gleaned learning from each other to make linkages in the process of enquiry that are necessary in the interests of broader, more complete outcomes. According to Deleuze and Guattari, *philosophy* is concerned with conceptual forms and therefore thinks with concepts; *science* is more concerned with the function of knowledge and therefore thinks with functions; and *art* is concerned with the force of sensation and therefore thinks with sensations (Deleuze & Guattari, 1994; Wood, 2018). Similarly, management scholar Mintzberg (2005) argues for the balancing of art, craft and science in a managerial style where *art* represents vision and

creative insights, *craft* represents practical experience and *science* represents facts and analysis (Mintzberg, 2005, pp. 92–3).

In Figure 7, Mintzberg tabulates The Three Poles of Managing, arguing that a balance is required for effective management according to the respective strengths and weaknesses of each pole in specific situations. An overemphasis on any one pole leads to narrow analysis of problems and the development of a limited range of solutions than would be the case if a broader, more holistic management approach was applied. In the case of an overemphasis on science, the words of Chief Scientist Dr Finkel could be interpreted as a call that supports the poles of art and craft as novel, visionary, imaginative creative insights and iterative, venturing, visceral storytelling related to practical experiences have great potential to add value to the central science pole that Finkel represents. The failure to embrace such ideas has detrimental effects on organisational outcomes and on the people affected by those outcomes.

THE THREE POLES OF MANAGING

	SCIENCE	ART	CRAFT
Based on	Logic (the verbal)	Imagination (the visual)	Experience (the visceral)
Relies on	Scientific facts	Creative insights	Practical experiences
Concerned with	Replicability	Novelty	Utility
Decision making as	Deductive	Inductive	Iterative
Strategy making as	Planning	Visioning	Venturing
Metaphor	The Earth (rational) so can get stuck	The air (spiritual) so can get lost	The sea (sensual) so can go adrift
Contribution	Science as systematic analysis, in the form of inputs and assessments	Art as comprehensive synthesis, in the form of insights and visions	Craft as dynamic learning, in the form of actions and experiments

Figure 7 The Three Poles of Managing (Mintzberg 2005, p. 93)

It is important to highlight the iterative experimental dynamic learning provided by craft metaphorically represented by the sensuality of the sea. Like art that has the risk of getting lost within its insights and visions, craft also has an untamed element where it can go adrift.

When juxtaposed against the rigidity of the rational in science, the essential difference between the poles is stark.

According to Mintzberg, *science* contributes systematic analysis in the form of inputs and assessments, *art* contributes comprehensive synthesis in the form of insights and visions and *craft* contributes dynamic learning in the form of actions and experiments (Ibid). In keeping with the mood in sections above, Mintzberg's model for managing is helpful as it provides a clear, emerging sense of the essential need for coexistence, one that strives for balance, harmony and completeness. In a similar vein, banking and commerce professor Mary Jo Hatch and colleagues emphasise the need for balance in what they describe as *The Three Faces of Leadership: Manager, Artist, Priest* where 'all three faces are required' (Hatch et al., 2006, p. 66). Building on Howard Gardner and Emma Laskin's *Leading Minds: An Anatomy of Leadership* (1995), the research of Hatch et al. focuses on CEO stories, the vast majority of which are heroic epics that give a *representation* of reality from a position of high status (Hatch et al., 2006, p. 54). More importantly in relation to this PhD, and to my prior Masters work 'The Myth of Themanus', they highlight the value of mythological archetypes and argue that 'through myth and symbols sharing, people cease being individuals and become a group capable of experiencing *communitas*, the foundation of culture and society and, through these, organizations' (Ibid., p. 60). I contend that it is the unique power of plays, the shared awakenings in the moment, 'here and now' as distinct from 'over there' learning, which creates potential for new insights about leadership to emerge. Finally, the observations of Hatch et al. in the second of their three aesthetics, dramatising leadership, further supports the PhD:

Suspense, conflict and tension are dramatic elements of life that are ever present in business just as they are in theater (Hatch et al., 2006, p. 56).



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 2 Scene 1

[At centre stage our narrators DEE and TAYLOR sit quietly on stools in semi-darkness, staring straight ahead into the audience.]

The spotlight rises at front stage left where a large full-length mirror leans against a wall. We are watching FIBS Regional Commander Ken Graham ('KG'), wearing a dressing gown and slippers, standing in front of the mirror holding a small pad with a pen tucked in it.]

KG *[addressing the mirror]*: These past few years have been tough for our agency; a test of morale. Volatile media reports have been unrelenting about government asylum seeker policy. It's an extremely sensitive issue but is all part of our job. *[KG straightens his back, pushing out his chest.]* The good news is that it is *our* boats, *our* staff doing the interceptions at sea, courageously protecting our community. As managers, we have to stay resilient, support each other and work hard – as a management team – to keep spirits high for staff ...

[An off-stage female voice interrupts.]

BARBARA: What're you doin', Ken?

KG *[responding towards the voice]*: Management forum tomorrow.

BARBARA: Values and Ethics launch?

KG *[looking down at his notes]*: Mmm. New mandatory online training.

BARBARA *[authoritatively]*: Make sure you mention that army general. What's his name again?

KG *[with a polite hint of distracted annoyance]*: Vince Davidson?

BARBARA *[confidently]*: Yes, Davidson. You know, the standards you ignore ...?

KG *[looking down at his notes, mumbling]*: Mmm. Where was I?

BARBARA *[breezily]*: People need to hear you being a strong leader, Ken. *[Sounds of shuffling and a door opening.]* Takin' the dog for a wee.

[Door closes.]

KG *[continuing his rehearsal, addressing the mirror]*: ... Head Office will handle most of the media heat. But please remember the Canberra edict – NO media statements about Operation Borders Downunder from regions. Refer all media enquiries through me to Canberra.

[Relaxing his stance, loosening his shoulders as if to lighten the mood and change the tone through an 'icebreaker'.]

I've been thinking about how to begin our new Values, Ethics and Conduct launch today and was reminded of an old story about ethics and values. It was in one of those Marx Brothers movies that my parents liked to watch when we were kids, I'll never forget it. *Duck Soup* I think it was, or, hang on, maybe it was *A Day at the Races* ...

[KG removes the pen and writes a 'note to self' to check the facts.]

Anyway, that doesn't matter. What is relevant is that the most famous Marx Brother, Groucho Marx, is deep in conversation at a cocktail party with an attractive socialite.

[On cue, a Groucho Marx character strolls onto the stage, a large cigar in his hand. Holding his arm is an elegant-looking woman wearing an evening gown and a fur coat.]

KG *[smiling into the mirror]*: Groucho says to her:

GROUCHO: Would you sleep with me for a million dollars?

KG *[smiling into the mirror]*: The woman smiles, flutters her eyelids, and says:

SOCIALITE: Why, yes, Groucho, of course I would.

KG *[still addressing the mirror]*: Then Groucho asks:

GROUCHO: How about for 10 dollars?

KG: And the woman says, indignantly:

SOCIALITE: What do you think I am?

KG: And Groucho replies:

GROUCHO: Well, we've already established that. Now we're just haggling over price.

[The stage falls silent, apart from Groucho's tap-dancing shoe shuffle and the socialite's high heels as they depart the stage. KG writes some further notes on his page.]

KG *[earnestly returning his gaze to the mirror]*: You see, Groucho Marx was a comedian who used comedy to make us stop and think. There was another line he had ... what was it again ...?
[fades]

[The spotlight dims on KG who exits stage left. The spotlight rises again on the two stools at centre stage where DEE and TAYLOR sit staring into the audience.]

DEE: If Ken Graham told you to jump off a cliff ... into the ocean, would you do it ... I mean ... just because he is our regional commander?

[TAYLOR muses over the question.]

DEE: What about if KG told you to tell someone else to jump off a cliff ... or, better still, for you to push them off ...?

[TAYLOR is unmoved.]

DEE: What about, Wally, our illustrious leader?

[TAYLOR stares straight ahead.]

DEE: Penelope Adams in HR? ... [pause] ... HR always seem to know best, don't they? In fact, all managers seem to have some kind of indisputable right to know best, don't they?

[TAYLOR is unmoved.]

DEE *[pondering]*: Is there really such a thing as 'leadership'?

[TAYLOR is silent.]

DEE: People have choices in life, don't they? ... [pause] ... I mean, adult people? ... If you don't really want to do something, you don't have to, do you?

[TAYLOR shrugs a look of uncertainty.]

DEE *[continuing to question]*: Regardless of what any leader might say?

[TAYLOR is silent. Pause. DEE also sits silently.]

DEE *[innocently]*: But, then, how do you maintain order and control? ... [pause] ... Guess that's why they get paid the big bucks ... [pause] ... Pay peanuts, you get monkeys.

[TAYLOR remains unmoved. Pause. DEE also sits silently.]

DEE: You're a supervisor, Taylor ... [pause] ... You have staff under you ... [pause] ... But you also answer to people above, don't you?

[TAYLOR nods once only, looking sideways at DEE as if to see where this questioning is heading.]

DEE *[probing]*: So, does that make you a leader ... [pause] ... or a follower?

[TAYLOR stares at DEE.]

DEE *[sparing TAYLOR, reflectively]*: What are we supposed to *do* when we're asked to do something we don't agree with ... something that clashes with our own personal ethics? ... [pause] ... What do we *do* when we have to witness dodgy behaviour? ... [pause] ... *[Looks down, shaking her head.]*

[Returning, both to her earlier question and her gaze to the audience.]

DEE: Do people really have choices ... [pause] ... or is something controlling us that we can't control?

[TAYLOR and DEE sit silently staring at the audience. Both rise from their stools and exit at opposite sides of the stage.]

ACT 2 Scene 2

[In an executive boardroom, a senior manager's weekly meeting is being addressed by KG, the short, smartly dressed regional commander with a penchant for standing throughout entire meetings. Seated around the table is the regional executive team comprising corporate and

operational directors of work programs and a small number of operational managers 'filling in' for their absent directors. The action commences with the introduction of new members to the table, followed by an agenda item detailing new or revised corporate policy initiatives.]

KG *[standing at the head of the table]*: Okay, let's get started everyone. *[Turning to his EA]* Judy, have we got coffee coming?

JUDY *[attentively]*: Yes Ken, the staff at Caffeine Addiction will be here with the usual orders at 10:30.

KG *[repeating a tired line, for the benefit of newcomers to the meeting]*: Unfortunate name that, isn't it? Especially in our business!

[Mild laughter.]

KG: As this is our first meeting for a few weeks due to Monday public holidays in successive weeks – *[smiling and winking]* God, staff get it good don't they? Anyway, we've got a lot to get through. We'll start by welcoming some new, and some not so new, faces to the table. Victor is with us to give an operational briefing on Outlaw Motorcycle Gangs and ice imports, but we'll get to that a bit later, thanks Victor. Also, Brendan is sitting in for Rowan. Welcome back to the exec table, Brendan. *[Puzzled]* I thought Rowan had returned from holidays?

BRENDAN *[slightly blushing]*: Um, yes, he returned from annual leave last week but he has to go to an interstate Intelligence conference in Central Office this week.

GINO *[in a goading tone]*: Conference doesn't start 'til Wednesday, Brendan. I'm going too but I'm here today.

BRENDAN *[awkwardly]*: Yes, Gino ... um ... apparently some family issue has come up at home. Rowan asked me to fill in for him today to give the weekly update from Intelligence.

PENELOPE *[officiously]*: That's the fourth meeting Rowan has missed this year. We've all got family issues to contend with. Didn't we agree that if we're going to perform as an executive 'team' then we all have to commit to being here when we can and ...

KG *[impatiently interrupting]*: Okay, okay, Penny, let's not worry about it. As I said, we've got too much to get through today. Now, I'll introduce you to Oscar Whitehead who has transferred down to us from Central Office to fill the manager vacancy in Goods Arrivals. Oscar is filling in for Wally today.

GINO: Where's Wally?

[PENELOPE shoots a smile at GINO.]

KG *[ignoring GINO'S interruption]*: Welcome Oscar, how about you start by giving us a brief summary of your background?

OSCAR *[slightly hesitantly]*: Thanks Ken. Um ... well firstly, I should say that Wally asked me to fill in for him today ...

GINO *[smiling and unable to resist another opportunity to stir the pot]*: Another family crisis at home?

OSCAR *[turning to check if GINO, seated immediately to his left, is serious]*: No ... not as far as I'm aware. *[OSCAR gives an awkward return smile to GINO.]* Wally is actually in his office downstairs but something has come up at short notice ... I mean ... I think it is something of an operational nature. He was really apologetic and said he would definitely be in attendance next week ...

GINO *[whispering an aside to PENELOPE across the table, with one hand to the side of his mouth]*: Believe that when I see it!

KG *[anxiously seeking to move along with the meeting]*: So, tell us about yourself, Oscar. You've come down from Canberra after working in a wide range of areas, most recently where? I mean, I know your background and that you come highly recommended, but others around the table might not be aware.

PENELOPE *[playfully indignant and keen to demonstrate her knowledge]*: Of course we know about Oscar's diverse background, KG! Not many people in FIBS who've worked both in intel and targeting, border policy *and* in the marine unit. Oscar was instrumental in driving operational training program redesign and he played a key role in the national communications strategy connecting marine patrols at sea with regional offices via central office command. Oscar will be the perfect addition to our management team, especially with terrorism, illicit drugs and illegal immigrant threats to our border.

KG *[trying to move on]*: Thanks Penny. That's a glowing endorsement for you Oscar! Nothing more to add, I'd say AND it's got you off the hook too! *[All smile.]* While you are on a roll, Penny, why don't you lead us in the first agenda item regarding the new initiatives coming out of corporate?

PENELOPE *[enthusiastically]*: Happy to, KG. I'll just need a few minutes to set up the PowerPoint.

[GINO leans towards OSCAR while PENELOPE is setting up.]

GINO *[inquisitively]*: So, you were actually in the marine unit? Were you in policy or did you go to sea?

OSCAR *[feeling more comfortable discussing his own story]*: Some policy. Mostly patrols. Up north. Ten years an operative. Killed my marriage. Twenty days at sea. Then twenty on the booze. Got off the boats into Canberra policy. Tried to patch it up. Worked for a while. Wife moved the kids down here to be closer to family. Settle in high school ... get 'em away from me.

GINO *[displaying little interest in OSCAR'S family life]*: What d'ya do on the boats? Got any formal marine skills?

OSCAR: Few. Small-craft pilot's licence. Didn't pilot FIBS vessels. Too large for my quals. Started as crew then into supervisor role on the boats.

GINO *[raising his eyebrows, smiling, whispering]*: We need to talk.

BRENDAN *[fascinated to hear more about OSCAR'S experiences]*: Must be a pretty tough gig at sea, Oscar?

OSCAR [*with a sense of gravity*]: Complex, demanding job. Crew feel like they're being pulled in a million directions. Asylum seekers. [*Shaking his head.*] So many SIEVs on the water. Packed with illegal immigrants. Human carnage. Sinking vessels, pulling bodies outta the water, documents destroyed. Can't identify anyone. Separated loved ones, repatriating corpses ... just horrible. Other border risks too. Narcotics, weapons, quarantine, illegal fishing. Have to be managed too. Stretched to the limit in resources. Political pressure is massive.

JUDY [*looking up from her minute-taking*]: Sorry Oscar, you said ... um ... SIEV, was it ...?

OSCAR [*turning to JUDY*]: Suspect Irregular Entry Vessels.

GINO [*looking earnestly at KEN as if expecting KEN to have intervened*]: Probably not for the minutes, I'd say, Judy.

[*JUDY, slightly embarrassed, draws a line through her written words and silently mouths an awkward 'Oh, sorry' in the direction of GINO and KEN.*]

PENELOPE [*confidently*]: So, if I can get your attention, as you can see from the slides, we've got some important corporate initiatives happening in the coming months, starting with the new Values, Ethics and Code of Conduct mandatory online training program. Ken's going to 'kick off' this initiative in our region later this morning at the management forum. Everyone in the entire organisation will be required to complete this online course on an annual basis so we've got to get the message out as soon as possible and as far and wide as possible.

GINO: Annually? Seriously, Penny? How on earth are we gonna get staff to do that when we've got such massive pressure on our operations? Oscar's marine unit is not the only workforce under pressure.

OSCAR [*defensively*]: Yeah, fully appreciate that, Gino. Wally'd be highlighting the huge increase in import volumes too. Cargo screening, examination, admin. Not to mention passenger arrivals which everyone knows are at an all-time high. Great for the tourism economy, I guess.

PENELOPE [*ignoring OSCAR*]: Mandatory online code of conduct training is just that – MANDATORY. Staff don't have choice. It'll be built into everyone's PIFAL.

JUDY [*reconfirming accurate minute-taking as her priority*]: What's PIFAL again, Penny?

PENELOPE [*glaring at JUDY incredulously*]: Performance, Individual Feedback, Assessment and Learning, or PIFAL, Judy, is the new performance management system. It has been operating for the past four months.

KG [*awkwardly*]: Er ... Judy and I haven't had a chance to progress the new PIFAL system yet, Penny. We plan to sit down as direct supervisor–staff member to do it later this week, don't we, Judy?

[*JUDY nods towards KEN, whilst keeping her head down, busily taking notes.*]

PENELOPE [*calmly*]: That's perfectly fine, KG. I know you've got it in hand. [*Staring provocatively around the table.*] Can't say that I have the same confidence in the rest of the management team though.

KG *[relieved and attempting to lighten the mood]*: They'll get it done, Penny. If anyone doesn't, just let me know and I'll look into it. Shouldn't be a problem, though. Great management culture we've got here – much better than other regions, especially when it comes to efficient and effective implementation of new policy out of Canberra. Speaking of which, what other corporate initiatives have we got to look forward to?

PENELOPE *[turning her attention to the central screen containing the PowerPoint slides]*: As you can see we've got some major staff community engagement initiatives: Diversity Awareness Week, Harmony Day, Building Resilience Workshops, a Multicultural Forum, Embracing Cultural Intelligence seminars, our FIBS in Schools program and Okie Dokie? Day for Mental Health Week will all be critically important features on our calendar.

GINO *[winking playfully at PENELOPE]*: Looks really good, Penny. Should make a huge impact on vessel arrivals, imported goods and passenger movements.

PENELOPE *[accepting the bait]*: Thanks for raising that Gino, because you are absolutely right. Our enablers are the glue that holds our organisation together. Without the enabling support of corporate, core business operational areas would never know how to survive their workload pressures. If you're complaining that you need more resources, Gino, don't forget who manages recruitment, selection, training and development. Better keep on the right side of us, hadn't you?

GINO *[smiling]*: Touché! *[Pointing to three works of art on the boardroom wall.]* They new, Ken?

KG: Yes, attractive pieces, aren't they? Barbara helped me select them. Captures our maritime roots. Especially the two Annie Amos originals.

GINO: What's the other one? Looks like an old masterpiece *[winking at PENNY]*. Maritime roots, too? From Noah's Ark perhaps?

KG *[smiling, staring up at an image of two smartly dressed men from the Renaissance, surrounded by an array of artefacts]*: Hans someone-or-other ... depicting two great leaders ... *[becoming increasingly inspired]* ... the magnificent progress of man, conquering our world ... proud men ... successful men ... men in charge of their own destiny, Gino! *[Holding his arms out.]* ... Like all of us!

PENELOPE *[playfully dismissive, finger pointing between herself and JUDY]*: Um ... we're not men, Ken ...

GINO *[ignoring PENNY's correction]*: Costly?

KG: Bargain. All three for under fifty.

BRENDAN *[surprised]*: Dollars?

KG *[proudly]*: Thousand.

PENELOPE *[sensing the mood, jumping in to save KG]*: Before I forget, a quick reminder to get everyone to check the expiry date on their security passes, please. I raised this weeks ago but Corporate Security have advised that no one has contacted them.

BRENDAN [*looking at his lanyard to check the back of his security pass*]: What's this about?

GINO: Corporate Security has lost all the data! Classic!

PENELOPE [*defensively*]: They were moving office!

BRENDAN: What, systems data, or hard-copy files?

GINO [*laughing*]: BOTH! Hilarious! That's SECURITY!

KG [*sensing his turn to return the favour by 'saving' PENNY*]: Just get your staff to check their passes and email Penny's team.

OSCAR [*taking notes*]: What details do you need?

PENELOPE: Name, pass number, expiry date.

BRENDAN [*still confused*]: Don't Corporate Security usually notify staff when their pass needs renewing?

GINO: YES, BUT THEY'VE LOST ALL THE DATA!

PENELOPE [*frustrated*]: Not all of it, some of it. They just need to get their records back on track.

KG [*moving on*]: Now, getting back to staffing. Before anyone gets carried away with expectations of additional staffing, Canberra made it abundantly clear at the Regional Commanders conference that the pressures on our budget will mean that staffing levels are likely to reduce, not increase. The Government funding model demands productivity gains year on year. We just have to work smarter. Do more with less. Be innovative.

GINO [*teasing*]: Do more ... what ... with less artwork, hey Ken?

[*KG is unmoved, ignoring the jibe.*]

PENELOPE [*shifting to the next slide*]: And that's where corporate comes to the rescue again. We have appointed Golden Parasite Consulting to work with us on a transformation project designed to streamline back-office corporate processes, to identify and 'suck out' the waste and to remove duplication on a national scale. The good news is that the anticipated millions of dollars in savings will be redirected back into core business operational areas.

GINO [*mildly interested*]: Impressive, Penny. Who's leading that project? How long before we reap the benefits?

PENELOPE: The consultants have actually been working on data collection and analysis for several years now and a new senior executive in Canberra, Julie-Anne Leech, has got carriage of the project. 'Jools' is fantastic, she is high energy, great sense of humour and really smart, switched on. Harvard MBA. Should see the new operating model and savings delivered within six months.

GINO [*bottom lip up-curved, nodding in cautious acknowledgement*]: Staff will be relieved to hear that. Where did Julie-Anne Leech come from?

PENELOPE: 'Jools' has a wealth of experience, mostly in the private sector. Prior to being headhunted by FIBS she was a senior exec in a leading-edge consulting firm.

KG [*innocently pondering*]: I thought someone in Canberra had told me that Julie-Anne transferred from the Tax Office. Hadn't realised she came from the private sector, Penny. Which consulting firm?

PENELOPE [*excitedly*]: Golden Parasite.

ACT 2 Scene 3 The Conductor of Conduct

[The management forum to launch the new mandatory online Values, Ethics and Code of Conduct program. The fading-in voice of KG addresses his management audience.]

KG: ... And then Groucho replies: 'Well, we've already established that. Now we're just haggling over price!'

RHONDA [*in an annoyed, desperate aside to PENNY*]: Oh fuck! Stop him!

[The room falls silent, with KG seemingly oblivious to his joke falling flat.]

KG [*philosophically*]: You see, Groucho Marx was a comedian who used comedy to make us stop and think. There was another line he had ... what was it again?

[KG continues.]

RHONDA [*with wide-eyed fury*]: You have got to stop him, Penny!

KG [*oblivious to RHONDA's asides*]: Ah yes, Groucho was being challenged by some crooks and he was trying to stand firm on ethical principles when he said:

[On cue, the cigar-wielding Groucho Marx character steps into the spotlight at front stage left to deliver his line, then exit stage left.]

"Those are my principles and if you don't like them ... well ... I have others ..."

[Renewed silence, apart from GINO who laughs audibly.]

And that's a perfect segue to introduce FIBS' new Values, Ethics and Code of Conduct mandatory online training program.

RHONDA [*to PENNY, with contempt*]: Fucking segue?! He's just destroyed the program before it's begun!

KG [*in the caring tone of a wise philosopher mentor*]: You see, Groucho was trying to show us – through comedy – that you have got to have a place to stand. You can't afford to be wishy-washy and sway in the breeze when it comes to ethics and conduct. Especially in our line of business. We have to set a high benchmark, work as a team and lead the way for our staff.

So, I commend this program to you all and implore you to take it seriously, to sit down with your staff and make sure they are aware of the importance of the program. You might also

remind them that it is a *mandatory* program that needs to be completed annually by every FIBS employee, starting with managers.

[An off-stage female voice interjects.]

BARBARA: Davidson? Ken? Don't forget Vince Davidson.

KG *[upbeat, smiling]*: Ah yes, one more thing ... Army Chief Vincent Davidson won universal acclaim for the stand that he took against bullying and harassment of women when he said:

“The standard you walk past is the standard you accept.”

HOPE *[in an aside to RHONDA and PENNY]*: Tell that to one of his senior Army officers. Thrown under the bus *[pointed fingers gesturing quotation marks]* ‘allegedly’. Now on suicide watch. Davidson won an Aussie gong for a borrowed line.

KG *[continuing]*: What standard will you accept? *[Pause]* I look forward to a successful rollout of the new program. Full staff engagement. Thanks for attending today. Keep those spirits high. Healthy work–life balance, please. Penny and her HR team have a range of initiatives to help you with work–life balance, so make sure you use them.

ACT 2 Scene 4 Floating Ideas

[GINO and WILL visit the docks to see VICTOR prior to a meeting at Caffeine Addiction with OSCAR who has been invited to join them following his meeting with KG. In the garage doorway of an open warehouse at the docks they see VICTOR and MORRIS working on a ship's manifest reconciliation. GINO has been hatching a plan to enable Waterside Control to purchase a boat he has had his eye on.]

GINO *[in a friendly, upbeat tone]*: How goes it, Victor?

VICTOR *[turning to see GINO and WILL approaching, their jackets and hair being tossed around by the strong sea breeze]*: Gino. Will. Just doing a reconciliation. Well, Morris is.

[A malfunctioning flickering light adds to the cold, dingy warehouse environment where MORRIS is busily checking off shipping containers against a manifest, pretending he hasn't seen GINO and WILL.]

GINO *[upbeat]*: Good job, Morris. Found any discrepancies?

[MORRIS shakes his head, eyes lowered towards his flapping paperwork which he is struggling to control in the wind, signalling that he wants to keep working.]

GINO *[playfully provocative, sensing MORRIS' shyness]*: Still playing with pet horses and those toy trains of yours, Morris?

[MORRIS, eyes lowered, blushes then gives a hurried single nod, his blue overalls, yellow-and-black chequered high-vis vest and blue peaked cap making him look like a jockey.]

GINO *[in an increasingly mocking tone]*: Great to have hobbies, don't you think, Will?

[WILL smiles and nods.]

VICTOR *[smiling and giving an encouraging pat on the back to MORRIS]*: Each to their own, hey Morrie? Love ya horses. And I'd kill to have a train set like yours at home! Tunnels through mountains and tracks under city skyscrapers ... Fill your whole garage with it, don't you? How many stations have you got again? Twenty, isn't it?

[MORRIS raises his eyes, giving a shy smile to VICTOR.]

GINO *[feigning interest, then turning to address VICTOR]*: Hmm, amazing. So, Victor, keepin' ya busy down here?

VICTOR *[cautiously]*: Why d'ya ask?

GINO *[calmly]*: Innocent question. Showing an interest.

VICTOR *[suspicious]*: If you're tryin' to pinch staff, Gino, we can't spare any. Up to our eyeballs in imports.

GINO *[calmly]*: No agenda, Victor. Ya gotta stop jumpin' at shadows, mate.

[VICTOR maintains a look of distrust.]

GINO *[changing the subject]*: Enjoy the exec meeting the other day?

VICTOR *[cautiously]*: Um, not exactly my cup o' tea.

GINO *[smiling, seeking to ease VICTOR's mind]*: Nor mine. The joys of management. Total waste of time but gotta play along. Goes with the territory.

VICTOR *[more confidently]*: Seems like not everyone bothers to 'play along' ... [pause] ... I mean, half the management team were missing.

GINO *[unmoved]*: Happens every week. No consequences if you don't turn up.

VICTOR *[bluntly]*: Never any consequences ... for managers.

GINO *[slightly defensively]*: Exec meetings are still important ... for the benefit of staff, y'know ... information sharing, comms, strategic direction, united approach ...

VICTOR *[seizing the opportunity to, himself, playfully stir]*: Wouldn't we all love a bit of information sharing?

GINO *[feigning indignance]*: I share info with you ...

VICTOR *[laughing]*: Yeah but it's all one way! When do management ever consult staff?

WILL *[defensively]*: What d'ya think we're doin' here, Victor?

GINO *[calmly]*: I'm always taking staff concerns to regional executive ...

VICTOR *[animated]*: But nothing ever happens as a result! Goes into a management 'black hole' and nothing changes, staff views are not acted on!

GINO *[playfully]*: Assuming, of course, those staff views are right ...

VICTOR [*ignoring the taunt and growing bolder*]: As for 'management and staff united'? Are you kidding, Gino?

WILL [*attempting a response*]: Least it's better to try to appear to be united, get staff motivated, believin' in what they do and ...

VICTOR [*earnestly, swiftly interrupting WILL*]: Most staff already believe in their work!

[*WILL tilts his head in doubting disbelief.*]

VICTOR [*ignoring WILL*]: They believe in the value of community protection. Protect innocent people – including their own families – from drugs, firearms, weapons, disease, terrorism [*a sweep of his hand in a gesture of 'and so on'*] ...

[*WILL shuffles his feet, his rising annoyance is becoming apparent.*]

VICTOR [*exasperated*]: ... but they do their jobs in spite of management, not because of 'em.

[*GINO raises the palm of his hand toward WILL.*]

GINO [*seeking to ingratiate himself with VICTOR*]: I hear ya, Victor. Can't disagree. You heard me at that meeting – ya can't say I wasn't calling 'em on it. [*Elbow nudging WILL.*] Was actually quite fun takin' the piss.

VICTOR [*in frustration*]: I heard you alright, Gino. But it's not about taking the piss! It's about action!

GINO [*defensively*]: Surely you can't lump me in with the rest of 'em. I see it for what it is. Not afraid to say what I think – to anyone! [*As if to convince himself.*] Staff don't work in spite of me!

VICTOR [*candidly, without malice*]: Bullshit they don't. Youse are all the bloody same.

WILL [*interjecting to defend his boss, and himself*]: Bullshit Victor!

VICTOR [*pensively, ignoring WILL*]: Management does somethin' to people. Ego. Privilege. Power. Gets 'em believing they're somehow more special than everyone else. 'The manager knows best', that's how they think. A 'company of one' with Priority One: self-interest. Anyone who disagrees is wrong, or worse, troublemakers, in the eyes of management. Sorry, Gino, but you're no different to any of 'em.

[*Silent pause. GINO, eyes lowered, gently kicks some loose stones at his feet.*]

GINO [*raising his gaze and calmly smiling*]: Thanks for your feedback, Victor. In a gesture of goodwill and to demonstrate the information flow that exists, I've listened to your views and will be sure to convey them to the regional executive at our next meeting.

[*VICTOR remains silent.*]

GINO: Pity, really. Exec were quite impressed with your Outlaw Motorcycle Gang presentation.

VICTOR [*more circumspect, seeking to change the subject*]: So ... [*pause*] ... what are you guys up to down here?

WILL: Quick meeting with stevedores. Won't be here long. Got a coffee meeting with the new marine unit guru Oscar Whitehead. He's with KG at the moment.

VICTOR [*gently nodding his head, curiously*]: Thought Oscar was working in Goods Arrivals under Wally?

WILL: He is. For now. Could be a major asset for us ...

VICTOR [*raising his eyebrows*]: How so?

WILL [*questioning as if to remind VICTOR*]: New sports cruiser?? Marine unit expertise?? Could be huge.

VICTOR [*surprised*]: You guys still thinkin' o' buyin' that boat? I don't get it?

GINO [*impatiently running his hands through his windswept hair, shifting his gaze from the entrance door to eyeball Victor*]: What don't you get, now, Victor?

VICTOR [*innocently trying to remain cautious but unable to resist the need to reiterate his opinion*]: I don't know ... you know ... surely it's not in our charter, Gino.

GINO [*firmly*]: We need you to be on board with this.

VICTOR [*hesitantly*]: Said it to you before. I mean ... I know you guys are trying to increase our 'hit rate' ...

GINO [*interjecting*]: And that's the message we want you to convey to staff. They trust you and ...

VICTOR [*ignoring the interjection*]: ... but, under Federal law, we only work at, or before, the border. Imported goods beyond the border, State government, Water Police responsibility.

GINO [*beginning to sound annoyed, overruling, eyeballing VICTOR*]: And as I've said to you before Victor, if we maintain surveillance continuity over those imported goods into local waterways, they remain under FIBS control, UNDER FEDERAL LAW. Familiar with controlled deliveries, aren't you, Victor?

VICTOR [*calmly, innocently, politely, but not bowing to GINO's authority*]: Don't we usually hand-over controlled deliveries to FedPol?

GINO [*staring at Victor but changing the subject, nodding towards MORRIS*]: Haven't you got work to do?

VICTOR [*shaking his head in resignation, walking away towards MORRIS and his flapping shipping documentation*]: Enjoy your meetings, gents.

[*Lights slowly fade on VICTOR and MORRIS as GINO and WILL begin walking across the stage.*]

GINO [*his annoyance obvious, gesturing back towards MORRIS in his blue overalls at the container stack with VICTOR*]: Check out Morris – is he a fucking dud or what? How do we employ people like this?

WILL [*as if sensing the need for calm objectivity*]: Actually, not too bad in terms of getting the job done. Really meticulous when it comes to detail. They reckon he's on the spectrum but he's pretty smart with some things.

GINO: Autism?

[*WILL shrugs his shoulders in a gesture of uncertainty.*]

GINO [*as if confirming his assumption*]: My son's got a couple in his class. Bloody nuisances ... [pause] ... so disruptive.

WILL [*conforming with GINO's assumption*]: Yeah, on the lower end, though, I reckon. Long as he's got the right people around him he goes alright. Sort of sees things that others might miss.

GINO [*laughing*]: What? Other normal people? Who actually speak ... to people, not horses and toy trains! [*Pulling on an imaginary train whistle.*] Toot! Toot!

WILL [*ignoring the jibe*]: Talks a lot when he feels comfortable with people. Clearly not comfortable with you, Gino! [*laughs*] Victor's good for 'im ...

GINO [*indignantly*]: Don't talk to me about Victor. He's a fucking killjoy if ever I've seen one.

WILL: Does have a point, sort of, don't ya think? I mean, we're s'posed to be working with federal and state police, sharing intelligence, working collaboratively ...

GINO [*overruling in a frustrated tone*]: But that's not what the game's about, Will. How many times do I have to tell you? You want our budget to be shredded, start sharing info with the Feds and state coppers. All the glory for narcotic detections will go to them, they'll ask for more funding on the back of their [*gesturing two fingered quotation marks*] "results" and the bloody mugs who did all the leg-work, who built the intel from scratch, we'll get nothing. Been happening to FIBS for years.

WILL [*hesitantly*]: Guess so.

GINO [*assertively*]: I know so! If we can increase our hit rate by expanding the border to include local waterways, then we might be a chance to get the credit we deserve. I'm doing this as much for the staff as I am for my own career progression. Can't believe Victor doesn't get that!

WILL [*pacifying*]: Victor'll complain about anything. Like most staff.

GINO [*continuing*]: People lift when we get positive results. It reflects well on everyone and the kudos is shared by all ... [pause] ... 'specially the boss [*winks*].

WILL: Boss-es, plural!

GINO [*seriously*]: Becomes self-perpetuating: the more illicit drugs we intercept, the more motivated staff are to make more hits. It's great for morale.

WILL: Strong argument for buyin' the boat, providing we can actually do that ... [pause] ... increase our hit rate.

GINO [*assuredly*]: Trust me. We will detect and intercept enough drugs to silence the doubters and validate my decision to buy the boat. One hundred per cent.

[WILL folds up his bottom lip, nodding his approval.]

GINO *[increasingly animated]*: Not only that, Will, but we'll also manage to have a bit of downtime on the boat while we're at it! *[Slaps WILL on the back]* There's enough stress in this job so we want to follow what HR keep telling us. Make sure there is some 'work-life balance' built into the exercise too, don't we?

[GINO playfully holds his palm up in a 'high five' gesture. When WILL raises his hand to oblige, GINO swiftly shifts his hand back to scratch his head, leaving WILL's hand high and dry. Both laugh.]

[Spotlight follows GINO and WILL as they move across the stage from the docks to the front of the café. Along the way, WILL queries how the boat deal can be done.]

WILL *[more seriously]*: So, have you actually got this boat purchase over the line, Gino? I mean, how are you going to get it past Finance? Procurement guidelines are pretty strict on this sort of stuff.

GINO *[sighing]*: Tell me about it. Hope Adler is circling like a vulture. She's told Penny Adams that she'll take it to Canberra if we try to go ahead with it.

WILL: That's what I mean: big ask to get through all the hoops you've gotta jump through.

GINO *[with rising annoyance]*: Matter of principle, Will. Got nothing to do with Adler. It's an operational matter so Corporate just need to butt out. Waterside Control has a budget to manage and operational objectives to meet within that budget. End of story. If Finance want to stick their bib in and jeopardise our operations then I will take it to Canberra! I'll take it to the bloody CEO and the Minister if I have to!

WILL: What about the Waterside Control hierarchy in central office? Has Gerry given you the OK to buy a boat down here?

GINO *[scornfully]*: Gerrard! Changed his name since his promotion. Wouldn't have even got to Head Office if silly bloody KG hadn't backed him for that London job years ago.

WILL *[vaguely recalling]*: You were in for that London gig, weren't you?

GINO *[still sounding annoyed]*: Had it sewn up. Mine for the taking. 'Til fucking Ken decided to back Gerry's *[sarcastically gesturing quotation marks]* "superior tariff and valuation skills".

WILL *[returning to topic]*: So, Gerry – sorry, Gerrard – has approved it?

GINO: Discussed it last time I was in Canberra. Distracted with his upcoming Senate Estimates grilling but his words were abundantly clear: "It's your budget to manage, Gino. If you can find reductions in order to make it happen then that's your call ..." *[Theatrically ticking the air with his index finger]* Diary note – Gerry Mander, tick! Green light if ever I've heard one. Better still, 'Gerrard' is moving to DFAT.

WILL: Already? Only been in the chair six months.

GINO: Deckchairs on the Titanic. Anyway, found the sports cruiser we want to buy.

WILL *[excitedly]*: New one?

GINO [*playfully earnest*]: No, Will, five years old. We have to be responsible when spending taxpayer's money. But it's in great nick and it's a six-berther; eight at a stretch if you include the outside seating together with the inside lounge and two bedrooms.

[Removing his phone from his suit's jacket pocket, GINO shows WILL a copy of the online advertisement on the Luxury Boat Sales website. The online advertised image of the 'For Sale' sports cruiser is displayed on the large screen, the vessel's name 'Sorrow' prominent.]

GINO: Don't worry about the name. We'll cover that with FIBS livery.

WILL: Sorrow?

GINO: Owner reckons his ex-wife had 'long blonde hair and eyes of blue'. Named the boat after her.

[WILL tucks his chin into his chest and shoots a look of puzzlement.]

GINO [*smiling*]: I said "ex-wife" ...

WILL [*laughs; sounding impressed*]: Nice. Expensive?

GINO: That's the other problem. Got it down to \$230,000 with the owner. My delegation-under-procurement rules is only up to two hundred grand. Requires higher levels of sign-off over two hundred.

WILL [*sarcastically*]: Bet Hope'll be happy about that.

GINO: Yeah, but we can get around it.

WILL: How?

GINO [*standing at the café entrance looking around for Oscar*]: Oh ... it's a bit complicated ...

[An excited WILL leans-in towards GINO, tantalised by the intrigue.]

GINO [*scanning his eyes around the café*]: Let's just say, a bit o' smoke and mirrors ... with invoices ...

WILL [*expectantly, the rapid arcing of his left hand beseeching an answer*]: Well ...?

[Musical interlude to support GINO action, prowling around the café, changing costume, with no dialogue. Music fades in – Nick Cave's song 'Red Right Hand' – plays from 0:00 to 1:45 then fades out: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RrxPKps87k>

A battered black top hat sits on the café cash register counter with a sign reading 'Tips'. GINO stretches a red rubber glove above his head then slips it over his right hand, stepping in time with the music. Swiftly donning the top hat, he dramatically sweeps a black tablecloth off a café table, throws it over his back and ties it around his neck. A waitress walks past wheeling a trolley. In a series of quickfire synchronised movements, the waitress lays down on the trolley as GINO covers her with another black tablecloth and charismatically spins the trolley around. GINO gestures towards his empty sleeves, left arm then right, removes the top hat to show an empty void, then picks up a knife and motions a sawing action through the cloaked midriff of the waitress. Music fades out at 1:45.]

GINO [*theatrically*]: Voila! And then there were two!

WILL [*laughing*]: You mean two separate invoices?

[*GINO nods and bows.*]

WILL: ... for the one purchase ...

[*GINO flashing a knowing smile, gestures with arms outstretched.*]

WILL: ... with both under two hundred grand for your delegate approval?

GINO [*matter-of-factly, removing his 'magician's cape with a theatrical flourish*]: Already discussed it with the owner. He'll issue as many invoices as we want ... if it means he gets his asking price. One for the hull, the engines, another for fittings and stuff – two should do it.

WILL [*inspired*]: Invoice splitting. That's genius!

GINO [*tapping his forefinger to his head as he returns the 'Tips' top hat to the counter*]: Up here for dancin', Will.

[*After returning the top hat to the front counter, GINO turns and clumsily bumps into a young businesswoman leaving the café, disturbing the work documents she is cradling in her arms.*]

GINO [*awkwardly*]: Shit! ... Sorry!

[*The woman stumbles, quickly regathers herself, flashes an embarrassed smile, then makes a hurried exit from the café, not realising she has dropped her credit card.*]

WILL [*jumping-in excitedly to come to the woman's aid*]: GI-NO!

[*WILL swiftly bends down to pick up the woman's credit card and chases her out of the café, exiting stage left as OSCAR enters, glancing around the café past GINO who is standing near the entrance.*]

GINO [*regathering his composure, realising that OSCAR hasn't seen him*]: Here's the new boy in town. Thanks for coming, Oscar.

[*GINO offers a handshake.*]

OSCAR [*surprised, extending his hand*]: Oh, there you are. Sorry. G'day Gino.

GINO: How's things?

OSCAR: Going okay. You?

GINO [*upbeat*]: Any fitter I'd be dangerous.

WILL [*excitedly re-entering the café*]: Already are dangerous! [*Shaking his head.*] Shirt-fronting women, Gino!

GINO: Where'd you go?

WILL: Dropped her credit card. Chased her to the car. How cute was she?

GINO: Catch her?

WILL [*laughing*]: Asked for her phone number. Wouldn't give it.

GINO: But she got her card back?

WILL [*smiles*]: And I got her rego number. Young to be drivin' a Merc.

GINO: Work car prob'ly. [*Turning to OSCAR*] What'll ya have, Oscar?

OSCAR: Flat white thanks.

[*GINO turns towards the counter to order coffees.*]

OSCAR [*to WILL as they sit down at the nearest table*]: Rego number, eh?

WILL [*smiling, tapping the side of his nose*]: Roads Authority intel holds many valuable secrets. [*Changing the subject.*] How'd ya go with KG?

OSCAR: Fine, I guess.

WILL [*playfully*]: Was he upstanding in your presence?

OSCAR [*with a hesitant smile*]: Yeah ... he was actually. Same as the regional exec meeting. What's the go? Bad back?

GINO [*returning to the table, smiling*]: Let's just say KG's got a weakness in his spine.

WILL [*pressing OSCAR*]: Raise any issues of concern with the mirror?

OSCAR [*confused*]: What mirror?

WILL [*pressing*]: KG? Did you raise any issues with KG?

OSCAR [*growing more confused*]: Well ... only early days but I did raise the chronic short-staffing. I mean, he asked me ... fresh eyes and stuff ... [*Looking sideways between GINO and WILL to try to gauge a reaction on their faces*]. Why do you call KG 'the mirror'?

WILL [*dodging the question*]: And what did KG say in response to your concerns, Oscar?

OSCAR [*puzzled*]: I don't know, um ... think he said "I'll look into it", which was good of him.

WILL [*high-fiving GINO*]: BINGO!

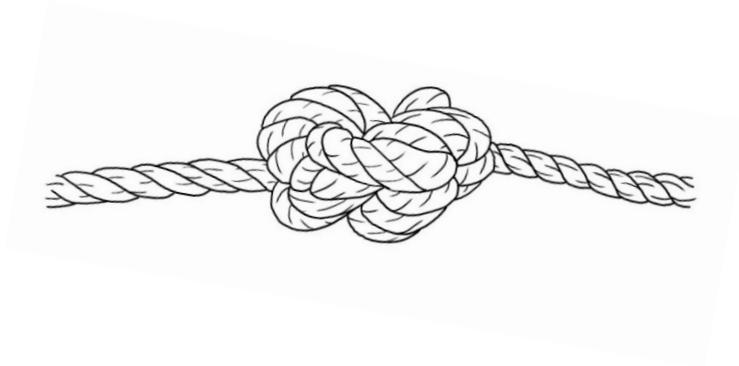
OSCAR: What?

WILL [*excitedly*]: The mirror! "I'll look into it"! Says it all the time!

GINO [*unconsciously echoing VICTOR*]: And then does nothing ... [*pause*] ... so the festering problems remain.

[*OSCAR nods quizzically with a half-smile, feeling strangely but warmly included on an 'in' joke.*]

GINO [*upbeat, changing the subject and keen to move on with more important business*]: So, tell us about life on the boats. We have much to discuss ...



III EBB and FLOW

One cannot step twice into the same river, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs.

Heraclitus 535–475BC (in Kahn, 1981, p. 53).

The Big Eddy

The majesty of The Rocky Mountains is a sight to behold. Extending 4800 kilometres from the northern parts of the Canadian province of British Columbia through the province of Alberta, before ending its awe-inspiring display in the southwestern state of New Mexico in the United States, ‘The Rockies’ have dominated the North American landscape for over 55 million years. The Canadian Rockies are noted for being the source of several major river systems, twisting and turning, rampaging and meandering their way to the Pacific Ocean in the west and to the Atlantic Ocean in the east. A wild, constant, incessant force of nature.

In 2019, following their wedding in ‘The Rockies’ of our nephew Joel and his Canadian bride Charlotte, I visited Revelstoke, British Columbia where the large steel trusses of ‘The Big Eddy’ bridge span the raging Columbia River below. The huge body of water flowing westward from the Canadian Rockies is constantly in motion, its generally predictable currents sometimes pinching off sections and creating a circular current of water called an eddy, a swirling whirlpool of water that causes nutrients normally found in colder, deeper waters to come to the surface. The oceans of the Earth abound with eddies, swirling motions, some kilometres-wide, which mix the water and carry it across the average currents. According to ecological scientists Professor Chris Hughes and Dr Peter Miller, so-called ‘smoke-rings’ are a pair of linked eddies spinning in opposite directions up to ten times the speed of ‘normal’ eddies. They are found almost exclusively in the southwestern seas of Australia, such as the Tasman, and could ‘suck up’ small marine creatures and carry them at high speed for long distances across the ocean (Hughes & Miller, 2017). In Revelstoke, B.C., The Big Eddy Bridge received its name for good reason, ominous and tragic as that might be. The Columbia River’s notorious Big Eddy is renowned for sucking up much bigger ‘fish’ than small marine creatures, claiming the lives of many unwitting adventurous human pioneers who vanished from their handmade timber canoes in the early decades of British Columbian settlement. The Big Eddy is a force to be feared – and avoided.

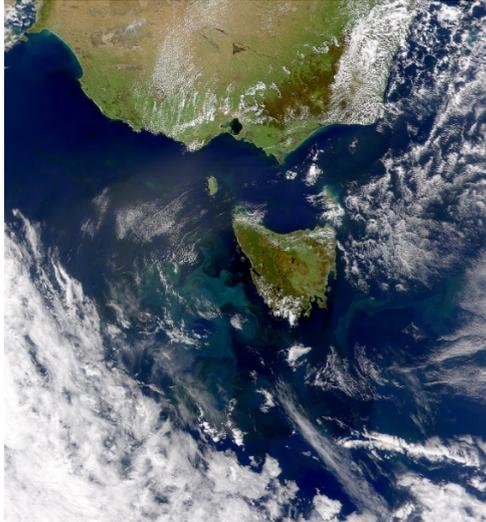


Figure 8 Linked eddies off Tasmania Australia (Image NASA Earth Observatory, 2000)

From a NASA satellite in space, the ‘smoke-rings’ of a pair of linked eddies in the southern oceans are clearly visible (see the turquoise water on the west coast of Tasmania in Figure 8). Indeed, from the safe steel-structured vantage point of The Big Eddy Bridge above the Columbia River, the wildly unpredictable swirling motions of ‘Big Eddy’ can be seen appearing then disappearing, approaching and departing, seemingly forming then dissolving. Step into the river, and no such view is available. To step into the river is to experience the power and force of a ceaseless unrelenting natural process, constantly emerging and evolving. The river system comprises a wildly diverse array of ecological members whose complex interdependence is the product of different variables interacting through multiple intersections in specific nonlinear fashion, creating and destroying, amplifying or dampening each other to produce an ongoing overall emergent outcome that is never static.

What insights can be gained from the sudden disappearance of those bold, intrepid pioneers of British Columbia, swallowed up and eradicated by ‘Big Eddy’, themselves being *human* members of a vast complex ecosystem? And how can this analogy be useful for a PhD that uses creative writing to explore organisational leadership? In her dystopian play *Far Away*, British playwright Caryl Churchill provides a clue about the treacherous natural world in which we humans, through ‘hype and hubris’ (Collinson & Tourish, 2014, p. 580), seek to control the unstable alliances and treachery lurking below the surface of our lives. As the character Joan describes in *Far Away*:

By the third day I could hardly walk but I got down to the river ... so I knew I’d have to go straight across. *But I didn’t know whose side the river was on*, it might help me swim

or it might drown me ... so at last I put one foot in the river ... When you've just stepped in you can't tell what's going to happen ... (Churchill, p. 38) [my italics].

Stability waves in a sea of process

Continuity of change, preservation of the past in the present, real duration [...] life, like conscious activity is invention, is unceasing creation

- Henri Bergson (1998, p. 23).

By combining the thinking of management scholar Henry Mintzberg (2005), Mary Hatch et al. (2006) and philosophers Giles Deleuze and Felix Guattari (1994), promising links begin to emerge between process theory in philosophy and systems, and network and complexity theory in economics and management. These links, I propose, are a step in the direction of connecting and enhancing business through artistic forms. This involves viewing the phenomena of management and leadership in organisations from the perspective of the whole system as distinct from trying to understand the phenomena through discrete categories or component parts of the system. With artistic forms, you apprehend the work as a whole and take your own subjective meaning (Taylor, 2008).

In the VUCA world of organisations, management of complexity is increasingly based on the systems-thinking paradigm that asserts that parts of a system can only be properly understood and managed when considered in relation to the whole system. Rather than employing the traditional analytic approach of breaking down individual parts of a system – be it an industry system such as healthcare, a political system or an organisation, categorising and labelling each individual part, framing them inside closed manageable boundaries, creating titles and organisation charts so that members can be controlled, monitored and measured – systems thinking employs a different paradigm. Organisational scholars Jonathan Rosenhead, L. Alberto Francob, Keith Grint and Barton Friedland (2019) assert that 'the field of complexity theory is concerned with the behaviour over time of certain kinds of systems' (Rosenhead, et al. 2019, p. 3).

In systems thinking, complex organisations have blurred boundaries or are unbounded. Consequently, it is more useful and relevant to discuss them as a network of connections within an open system or organisation. Organisational leadership scholars Mary Uhl-Bien and

Michael Arena claim that complexity theory offers insight into leadership adaptability through complex adaptive systems, which offer superior understanding of adaptability and emergence (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018, p. 95). Perspectives that see an organisation as tending towards equilibrium through *stabilising elements* of structured stability, planned predictability and control are inferior to complex adaptive systems where *disturbing elements* that ‘push a system toward chaos’ (Ibid.) create instability, unpredictability and dynamism. It is important to note that *balance* is required because without the pressures of disturbing elements, the system would remain stuck in equilibrium without stabilising elements, chaos would ensue and no new order would emerge (Ibid.).

Sociologist Zygmunt Bauman describes this system as a central feature of the ‘liquid modern’ world in which we now live. Under the previous system of ‘solid modernity’, control through categorisation and hierarchical bureaucratic rules and regulations encouraged behaviour of ‘just following orders’ (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2014, p. 39). According to Bauman, the same fixation on effectiveness, efficiency, profit and ‘abhorrence of ambivalence’ remains under the liquid modern system but the change that has occurred is the cessation of trying to stabilise uncertain social and economic progress (Ibid., p. 40). In short, the unnerving complexity of uncertainty, change and ambivalence is to be conquered through a tactic of increasing uncertainty, increasing the tempo of change and increasing the excision of values thereby dissipating structures, ‘making all relationships fluid, unstable and insecure (Ibid.) Everything is seen as individual free choice in the present – in the here-and-now. In local, micro terms, the illusion of free choice is created; however, injustice and suffering are delivered on the more macro level of open organisations and society (Ibid., p. 41).

A question emerges: How do we manage an open organisation where control over the members has been reduced or lost?

What also emerges are echoes of Alistair Mant (1998) and the ‘crisis of leadership’ detailed in Chapter 2.

The key concepts of systems and complexity theory are interdependence and nonlinearity. When combined with network theory where a highly scalable, disruptive new mode of peer production or mass collaboration is creating a more dynamic swarm-like organisational form, such as open networked platforms Airbnb, Uber, The App Store and Wikipedia, a fundamental paradigm shift towards adaption and evolution has emerged (Press & Goh, 2018). This turn from resisting change towards adapting to it intrinsically involves an acceptance of uncertainty,

which appears to be a radical shift from traditional scientific approaches to conscious analytical expectations that the future should be *knowable*. It is argued in this PhD that a liquid modern world of uncertainty, instability and insecurity can glean valuable, previously inaccessible insights into organisational leadership through an experimental ‘not knowing’ emergent creative practice research (CPR) process containing multiple intersecting planes, such as the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript. In Act 7 Scene 1, Oscar struggles in his conversation with Victor towards addressing non-linear complexity through an internal relational, reflexive approach of ‘what he makes of what happens to him’:

OSCAR [*raising his eyes to stare at VICTOR*]: So, it’s an eye-for-an-eye, is it?

[*VICTOR remains silent.*]

OSCAR [*shaking his head*]: That’s just another game ... [*pause*] ... where YOU wanna control the rules ...

Using the traditional management linear cause-and-effect approach has long been the easiest, most efficient method of problem-solving. However, adopting such an approach prevents us from having to deal with the complexity behind a situation. Linear thinking is effective in simple environments but falls well short of being effective in complex environments where the nonlinear interaction of wide-ranging variables across multiple intersecting planes necessitates genuine attempts to understand the system as a whole.

For example, global terrorism is ‘good for business’ (particularly if you are in the business of security or Customs and Border Protection). The linear cause-and-effect response would be to eradicate terrorism through an allied campaign of superior military force. In doing so, the problem of terrorism is being viewed as independent from us and other things. Terrorism is a threat that simply exists **out there** – separate from us – and we are going to tame it with a single cause-and-effect response, such as the ‘Global War on Terror’ (GWOT) that was promulgated under the USA’s Bush Administration.

An alternative approach would be to address the terrorism phenomenon in terms of nonlinear complexity, by focusing attention less on the phenomenon itself and more on the diverse network of interdependencies across multiple intersecting planes that are generating the phenomenon. It is important to highlight here that this alternative approach includes honest critical self-reflection and recognition of our own interdependence in the issue; the role our actions have played in causing the problem.

Similarly, in applying process theory in organisations, Hernes (2008) highlights the contentious claim of sociologist John Foran (2004) that the global terrorism phenomenon was fundamentally created by the United States. The US-led 'GWOT was unable to conceive of organisation without discretely isolatable structures or properties' (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 287). By asking narrow, linear questions based on state-centric assumptions about *positions* (concerning training camps in Pakistan or Afghanistan), *properties* (such as characteristics of a fundamental Muslim) and *possessions* (namely links to state-sponsored al-Qaeda), GWOT leaders missed the point that al-Qaeda could not be understood as a concrete, strictly bounded enemy *organisation* because it resembled more of a loosely coupled *network*, with sometimes dormant cells spread across many nation-state borders.

Organisation scholars Ajit Nayak and Robert Chia (2011) argue that 'process thinking recognises the contingency, emergence, creativity and complexity are fundamental to our understanding of organisational life' (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 283). They assert that: 'To understand "individuals" and "organisations" processually is to regard them as temporary "assemblages of *organising*" (Cooper & Law, 1995, p. 239) that are abstracted from an underlying "sea of ceaseless change" (Chia, 2003: 131)' (Nayak & Chia, 2011, p. 284).

For James (1925), in the analysis of social life, a process philosophy approach means lying 'flat on its belly in the middle of experience, in the very thick of its sand and gravel' (James, 1925, p. 277).

In other words, you must *step into the river* to experience it, but it will never be the same river and you will never be the same person due to the fluxing, transformative ecological event clustering, and relationship patterns that innovatively conceive the unceasing emergence of ever-new existence.

Once again, an atmosphere of this nature builds as Oscar continues to strive, reflexively, in *Work. Life. Balance. Act 7 Scene 1*:

[VICTOR remains silent. A close-up of OSCAR's face appears on the large screen behind them, cheeks sagging, tired, sad eyes, lips tense, the strain evident.]

OSCAR: The system hardens our hearts.

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Even worse if you get some power ... some skin in the game.

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: What d'ya want me to do ... *[pause]* ... tear out my own heart and become just another player in YOUR game?

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Want me to become toxic, too?

Applying this processual perspective in business organisations, Karl Weick (2009) uses the instructive label 'organised impermanence' to such patterned yet indeterminate ever-changing relationships and event clusters.

Management scholars Mark Dibben et al. (2017) and process theory philosopher N. Rescher (1996) reject a 'process reducibility thesis' which presumes primacy of things, social entities and generative mechanisms over processes, arguing that the former 'things' are merely secondary 'stability waves in a sea of process' (Rescher, 1996, p. 53).

Building bridges

I live on Earth at present, and I don't know what I am. I know that I am not a category. I am not a thing – a noun. I seem to be a verb, an evolutionary process – an integral function of the universe.

- Robert Quinn (2012, p. 69) appropriating Buckminster Fuller (1893–95), maverick American designer, engineer, architect, poet, artist, philosopher, author, systems theorist and ecologist.

In her Harvard Business School book *Leadership Can Be Taught*, Sharon Parks (2005) argues that art, artist and artistry should be given a more prominent place within the lexicon of leadership theory and practice.

Artists work within a set of relationships that they cannot fully control [...] the artist works in a profoundly interdependent relationship with the medium – paint, stone, clay, a musical instrument, an orchestra, a tennis court, a slalom run, or food [...] A potter, for example, must learn that clay has its own life, its own potential and limits, its own integrity. The potter develops a relationship with clay, spending time with it, learning to know its properties, how it will interact with water, discovering that if you

work it too hard, it will collapse, and if you work with it, it will teach you its strength, your limits, and the possibilities of co-creation (Parks, 2005, p. 211).

Parks bases her work on the case-in-point pedagogy of Harvard Business School professor Ron Heifetz (Heifetz et al. 2009), who believes the possibilities of co-creation exist between a single actor 'leader' and his or her followers. Ironically, the relevance of Parks and Heifetz to my research is not directly aligned to their perspectives on leadership. It is alignment to the here-and-now, story-based sense-making of the case-in-point pedagogy where a connection exists. Unlike the single-actor leader perspective of Parks, Heifetz and their colleague Marty Linsky (Heifetz & Linsky, 2017), the leadership focus of this PhD research seeks to build upon leadership emerging from relationships as evidenced by a vast array of scholarly work on the theme of relational leadership (Czarniawska, 2018; Ropo & Salovaara, 2019; Munro & Thanem 2018; Rhodes & Westwood, 2016; Einola & Alvesson 2019; Pullen et al. 2017; Dibben et al. 2018; Linstead & Rhodes, 2015; Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015; Pullen & Rhodes, 2015; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Cunliffe, 2009; Ropo, 2005; Ospina, 2017; Hosking et al., 1995; Cunliffe & Eriksen, 2011; Alvesson & Svenginsson, 2013; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012; Wood, 2005, 2018; Denis et al., 2012).

Some of the work of these management, leadership and organisation scholars involves the radical reconceptualisation of 'leadership' as a *process of becoming* rather than an event or thing performed by an individual actor. From the early-2000s stages of reconceptualisation in the field, leadership was being viewed by some scholars as an emergent co-creation that occurs within the gap of the managerial leader–follower dichotomy (Wood, 2005). This process perspective creates potential for new academic and practical knowledge about organisational life to emerge and, according to Uhl-Bien (2006), 'moves leadership beyond a focus on simply getting alignment (and productivity) [...] to a consideration of how leadership arises through the interactions and negotiation of social order among organisational members' (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 672). To examine such leadership dynamics as interactions and social order lends itself to a creative writing research method. In their article on the creative writing PhD, Sempert et al. 2017, argue that the responsive and reflexive nature of creative writing that makes a contribution to knowledge is the methodology itself, i.e. 'a way of working that emerges from the incubation of and reflection on a project/practice' (Sempert et al., 2017, p. 206). They argue that 'in creative writing research both knowledge and text can be innovated through open-minded and reflexive research incubation' (Ibid.). This creative practice research method

of incubation, experimentation and 'being willing to not know' (Taylor, 2018, p. 4) is processual in nature.

Dibben et al. (2017) examine leadership through the lens of process metaphysics, where leadership is felt subjectively within ourselves as an internally complex occasion of experience. In contrast to a Kantian view where 'the world emerges from the subject', Dibben et al. follow a Whiteheadian view (1929/1978) in which 'the subject emerges from the world' as an organism, a 'being' and a potential for every 'becoming' (Dibben, 2017, p. 172). Griffin (2008) follows Whitehead's 'serially ordered occasions of experience' by claiming that 'experience is always active not passive'; it is not what happens to us that counts (i.e. 'external relation'), but rather what we make of what happens to us for ourselves and others (i.e. the internal relation)' (Ibid., p. 172). In process thought, experience is primary to consciousness; i.e. we must experience something first before we can become conscious of it.

Throughout my career in management roles, during vulnerable experiences with staff and colleagues when they or I faced a problem or disappointment for which we sought the others' counsel, a mantra of hope seemed to emerge to help sustain us: 'Our growth is in the hard bits of life'. In the experience of parenting, too, this mantra has helped our children in building resilience through life's challenges. I am uncertain about the origins of the mantra or how it came to be part of my life story. I neither recall it being taught in a classroom nor was it a citation in a text. Yet, somehow, I have learned, *through experience*, that any depth and breadth and genuine growth in my maturing as a human being has occurred following times of challenge, fear, uncertainty, chronic doubt and disillusionment. Conversely, times of joyful positivity, stability, peace, confidence, tranquillity, while initially appealing, ultimately led to a self-serving feeling of comfortable stagnation, inattention or slowed personal growth. The latter contented state is not exactly undesirable; there have been many periods in my life where I have internally screamed: 'Enough growth!' The point to be emphasised is that sense of experience actively preceding consciousness. It is what we make of what happens to us, for ourselves and others, that counts most, both in our personal lives and in our professional lives in organisations.

Batty (2016), Wood (2018), Davis (2013), Taylor (2018; 2008; 2002) and Heathcote (1983) argue for the capacity of artistic endeavours, including creative writing (novels, scripts, poems and more), to evoke or render sensory experiences in the sense of embodied subjective lived human experience. If, as process philosophers and a minority of organisational leadership

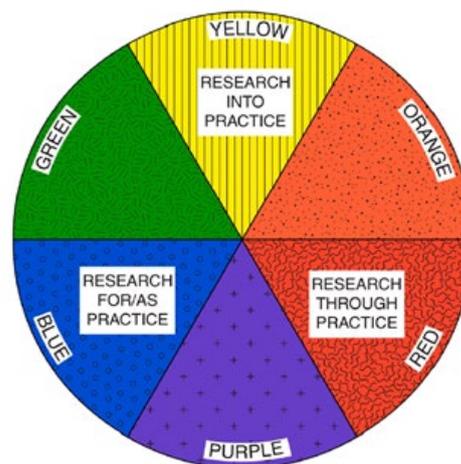
scholars assert, humans move to meet experience (internal relation) and creative practice has the capacity to create that experience, then to examine organisational leadership experience through the lens of creative practice would appear to have significant potential. If, like art, leadership is 'experienced' by processes by which they are created, then the potential exists for incremental change to occur in organisational life through the shifting tides of leadership and art. Simply put, might the experience of viewing actors in *Work. Life. Balance.* assist organisational actors to pay greater attention to subtle, embodied 'ordinary affects' in their workplaces leading to improved leadership outcomes for people in organisations (Gherardi, 2017)?

Reinforcing the experience and artistry of Sharon Parks' potter, Sophie Hope (2016) argues that 'practitioner–researchers do not merely “think” their way through or out of a problem, but rather they “practice” to a resolution [...] the art of enquiry is apparently about thinking through making' (Hope, 2016, p. 84). In keeping with creative practice themes, US sociologist Lisbeth Berbary's (2011) work with university students places an emphasis on language and truth and identifies 'a crisis of representation' through the repetition of language constructing 'the fiction of Truth [that] is not representational of “the real,” but rather is a construction based on power relations within the specific discourse' (Berbary, 2011, p. 186). Using creative analytic screenplay to illuminate how sorority women learned gendered expectations for being 'ladylike', Berbary aimed to show how forces such as discipline towards compliance, and resistance to – or reinterpreted expectations of – the dominant discourse impact on the experience of students. Berbary identifies creative analytic practice (CAP) as one method for representing experience differently allowing researchers to balance the line between fact and fiction.

The intention in this PhD research is not to objectively determine fact from fiction to relay 'the story that needs to be told' (Ibid.). However, like Berbary, my PhD aims to employ creative practice as a methodology for doing representation differently, in this case to examine organisational leadership through a different lens. Drawing on her study of Michel Foucault and Judith Butler, in which she develops and explores the use of an ethnographic creative analytic screenplay in gendered discourses as data representation (Haseman, 2006), Berbary claims that data representations through creative genres such as fiction, poetry, narrative and performance 'are often more effective at relaying the story that needs to be told' (Ibid.). In asserting that creating complex visions is part of the movement of 'art as research, research as

art' (Ibid., p. 195), Berbari sets a course for the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript which aims to allow the reader/audience to 'envision the spaces within which the characters exist and connect with the emotions, feelings and experiences that the characters represent (Ibid.).

Building on the research of Frayling (1994), Sophie Hope (2016) observes that a 'non-practice research project might start with a defined research question, a methodology, and a set of methods to find answers [whereas] research that starts with practice can often complicate these dynamics as the question and methodology emerge through, making, doing and testing things out' (Hope, 2016, p. 77). While acknowledging the dual criticisms of social science as being too analytical, elitist and objectivistic and fine arts as being too subjective, irrational and consumed by 'sublime rapture', Hope employs the work of Anderson (2009) to note the overlaps in epistemological and methodological principles between them, concluding: 'There is no logical reason why artistic research could not be performed while adhering to the principle of transparency and openness as regards methods and values' (Hope, 2016, p. 78). To help to clarify the differences in meanings, motives and outcomes in the relatively new paradigm of practice research, which drama scholar and dramaturg Brad Haseman (2006) calls 'performative research', as distinct from more traditional qualitative research methodologies (Ibid.), Hope introduces the creative practice research 'colour wheel' in which she differentiates between research into practice, research through practice and research for/as practice.



Colour wheel of practice-research. (Colour online, B/W in print)

Figure 9 Colour wheel of practice-research

In the yellow and orange segments of research *into* practice, researchers might employ artists to help conduct research using creative engagement methods, illustrate findings or deliver

visual outcomes. The purple segment sits between the blue segment of research *for/as* practice and the red segment of research *through* practice. While researching *for/as* practice in the former (blue) where ‘thinking is embodied in the artifact’ (Ibid., p. 82), the artist might also be getting to the heart of a problem through that practice, hence the overlapping purple segment. Researching in this purple segment requires the artist to not only stand outside the practice artefact to communicate it but also to stand within it in order to create it (Ibid.). The clockwise shift around the colour wheel works from creative practice used for research (yellow) towards research used for practice (blue), leading to the green segment where new forms of practice might emerge (Ibid., p. 83).

Following Hope (2016), it is largely through the purple segment that the work in this PhD flows. In doing so, it contributes to the relatively under-researched fourth quadrants in Taylor and Hansen (2005) at Figure 5 and the Nelson Phillips (1995) question mark at Figure 4. The aim is to complete research through practice where the creative work is made possible through research; where the creative work ‘knows’ (Batty et al. 2016), is a work that thinks, as the space within the practice becomes a series of mini-stages for reflections, confessions etc; and where the creative work is a research output because it contains research findings. The creation of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript began as a quest to explore questions related to authentic leadership with a view to achieving more authentic leadership outcomes in organisations. As a result of the experimental creative–critical playscript development process, the mini-stages of relational exchanges, reflections, confessions etc. on which characters not only communicated with each other but also with their creator, the *post-authenticity* nature of work in the field of organisational leadership emerged as a research finding.



Tiny fissures

My decision to employ creative practice in this emergent methodological research, which aims to contribute new knowledge to the leadership context of organisations, is supported by Barrett and Bolt (2007), who argue that:

[P]ractice-led research is a new species of research, generative enquiry that draws on subjective, interdisciplinary and emergent methodologies that have the potential to extend the frontiers of research (Barrett & Bolt, 2007, p. 1).

Whereas the focus of leadership theory has been predominantly cognitive and conceptual, it is the experiential, bodily, affective nature of creative practice that creates the potential for novel contributions to new knowledge and extends the frontiers for scholarly work in the fields of leadership development, organisational behaviour and relational leadership.

In her study on innovation in drama teaching, education scholar Susan Davis (2013) highlights the ongoing relevance and potency of Dorothy Heathcote, a pioneer in the field of education who used drama as a tool to promote holistic learning for children in schools (Davis, 2013, p. 38). In Figure 10, Davis employs a reworked 'systems model of creativity' (after Hungarian–American psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (1996)) to unpack her 'story'. The outside of the triangle details characteristics of people who engage in creative practice which includes a strong sense of daring to be different, experimentation, persistence through failure and honest critical reflexivity. Inside the triangle is a demonstration of the interplay between the three main areas of the individual, the domain and the field from which creative practice is realised. Products or outcomes from the creative activity are identified inside the triangle as creative experience, creative practice and creative products (Davis, 2013, pp. 26–7).

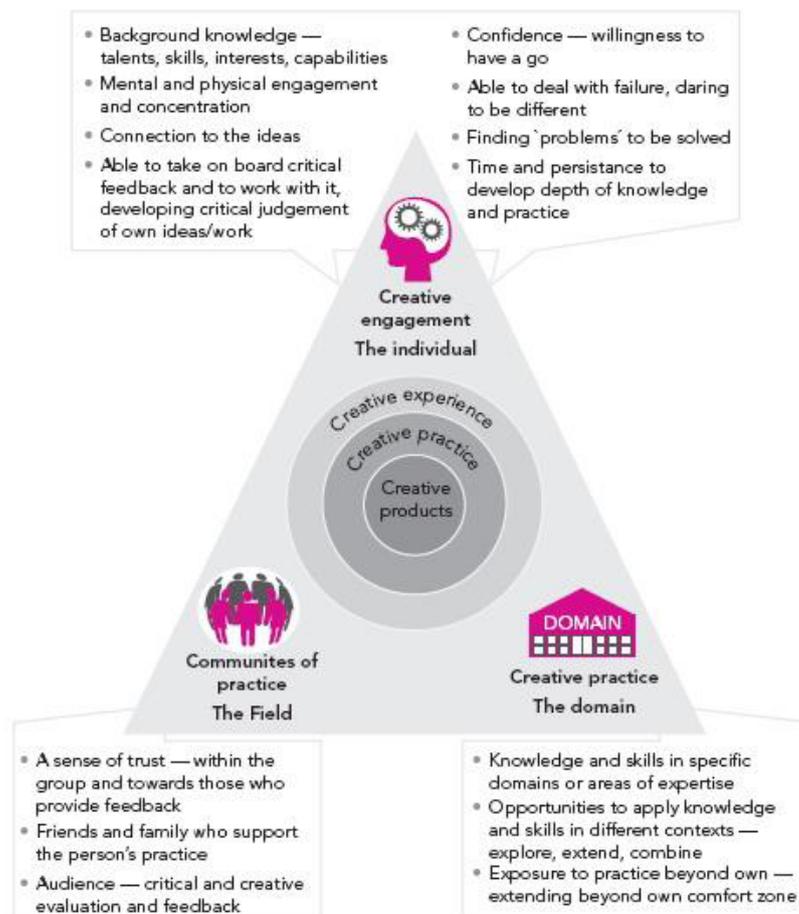


Figure 10 A systems model of creativity (after Csikszentmihalyi, 1996)

Davis uses the model to study the impactful life of Heathcote in a field where she was far from an establishment insider. Heathcote came from humble beginnings, poor in financial terms but richly raised within a loving and supportive environment populated mainly by women, including grandmother, aunts and neighbours (Ibid., p. 28). Leaving school in Year 8 to work in a nearby Yorkshire mill, Heathcote was self-taught in drama. She was comfortable working across domains, found risk-taking was essential to her learning creativity and believed the most valuable learning occurred when experiences hadn't worked as planned and you had to find alternatives (Ibid.). In other words, *her growth was in the hard bits of life*. Davis describes Heathcote as a pioneering, inspirational leading drama teacher who also had her critics. Chief among them were those establishment scholars who saw her focus on cross-curricular work and promotion of 'universal' human understandings as unhelpful for achieving discipline-based drama and theatre learnings (Ibid., p. 32). One of her former students defends her:

And the other thing is the awareness of the drama/theatre aesthetics. She was so theatrical but the political divides that have raged around her at times with people saying that she wasn't concerned with the aesthetics of theatre. That was wrong really [...] it was certainly about the drama, the aesthetics and the artform; however, *the artform was in the service of the children*. That was important to her. That artform was not for the sake of itself, *not art for art's sake*, it had to go beyond that (Ibid.) [my emphasis].

Heathcote (1983) captured the essence of the potential for new knowledge through creative practice in her assessment of drama:

What's possible with drama has to do with the way time is used in drama. Much learning tends to be what I'd call 'over there' learning. In other words, when we say 'Let's consider that matter or those people' we are 'here' (in time and space) pondering on the matters 'over there'. But in drama you can't do that, because suddenly you are walking in the time of the event [...] You have the whole energy of knowledge, all the affairs of mankind 'over there'. *Drama filters it to us 'here' through a tiny fissure*. That fissure is the event, the episode, and those who are, not were, but are present at that one moment [...] It's the pressure, or the authenticity, of that dramatic moment that creates the new knowledge, that makes different connections, and that suddenly brings connections that have been dormant in my previous knowledge into active use in making sense of new information I encounter (Heathcote, 1983, p. 695) [my emphasis].

Several connections to this PhD emerge from the observations of Davis and Heathcote. Firstly, the 'tiny fissure' to which Heathcote refers is representative of the minor gesture of Manning (2016) and Deleuze and Guattari (1994); an agitation working within the major narrative that surfaces something previously sidelined and provides a political principle to the perturbation of the system.

Secondly, Heathcote's motivation was primarily in service of others, in her case powerless others such as children, including the underprivileged. In the liquid-modern world we inhabit today that some describe as a VUCA world, the façade to which Zygmunt Bauman refers is an example of 'art for art's sake', 'its purpose first and foremost as a marketing tool, a brand' (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2014, p. 41). Organisational stories abound, some of which became the subject of Royal Commission investigations as in the case of the Commonwealth Bank

financial planner ‘Dodgy Don’, where managers or leaders view the existence of an organisation as merely a vehicle for the advantage and advancement of their own personal brand interests. *Leadership for leadership’s sake*. Such behaviours succinctly describe Alistair Mant’s ‘raiders’. In the *Work. Life. Balance*. playscript, the non-human character in the form of a Revolving Door is one creative representation of the organisational façade.

Thirdly, in relation to linearity, the traditional management linear cause and effect approach has long been the easiest, most efficient method of problem-solving, preventing us from having to deal with the complexity behind a situation. The US-led response to global terrorism was founded on the simple assumption that terrorism is a threat that simply exists *out there* – separate from us – and we are going to tame it with a single cause and effect response, such as the GWOT. What Davis (2013), appropriating Heathcote (1983), demonstrates is this traditional simple linear approach applies not only to leadership and management decision-making but also in the field of education, including leadership and management education.

Might this be another reason why long-term managers whose hectic working lives are interrupted by ‘non-essential’ leadership development programs protest: ‘We’ve done leadership’ (Conroy, 2015)? Why should I bother giving this my attention? Yet, as we shall see throughout this PhD, *attention* is key in improving organisational life experiences.

In the 21st-century VUCA world of leadership, management and organisations, the turn towards systems and complexity theory, network theory, nonlinearity, adaption and evolution, the paradigm shift from resisting change towards adapting to it intrinsically involves *an acceptance of uncertainty* which appears to be a radical shift because of traditional scientific approaches to conscious analytical expectations that the future should be *knowable*.

The creative–critical nature of creative practice research, such as the writing of a playscript, is an emergent, *not knowing* approach to writing, an experimental ‘way of working that emerges from the incubation of and reflection on a project/practice’ (Sempert et al., 2017, p. 206); an approach that accepts uncertainty, is trying to *feel comfortable being uncomfortable*, to generate affective responses, maintaining focus on ordinary affects as they relate to characters who are in a constant state of becoming. As organisational aesthetics scholar Steven Taylor (2018) observes, social science identifies individuals as a member of a class or category that aims to achieve convergent generalisability (one answer that everyone reaches), while art works with divergent generalisability and a multiplicity of understanding. For Taylor (2018), ‘divergent generalizability – the way each of us can connect to a piece of art (Taylor et al.,

2002) and take away our own lesson of what it means for us is at the heart of the difference between art and science' (Taylor, 2018, p. 4).

I argue that if we can allow ourselves to relax the boundaries between art, science and philosophy, blurring the lines in order to view human experience as a whole multi-faceted complex phenomenon, then we might come to terms with our divergent generalisability by permitting multiple understandings, leading to new ways for each of us to connect to our shared human experience in organisational life.

It seems to me that one of the problems with education and discourse relating to difficult topics such as ethical dilemmas, including in organisational leadership, is that too often the focus is on the 'big', most important issues, criminal acts e.g. fraud on a GFC scale, extermination/murder of the less powerful, extreme sexual harassment/rape, large-scale theft of employee wages, grand institutional cover-ups and other salient examples of chronic power abuse. On one level, this is perfectly reasonable as such crimes need to be exposed. But, terrible as these crimes are and as much as I would never condone them, surely none of them would ever apply to me? They occur 'over there' in some other realm, separate from the life I am living. In his paper on sensemaking, organising and storytelling, organisational scholar Karl Weick appropriates philosopher George Berkeley (1685–1753) who argues: 'no sooner do we [philosophers] depart from sense and instinct to follow the light of superior principle, to reason [...] but a thousand scruples spring up in our minds [...] The cause [of which is] the obscurity of things, or the natural weakness and imperfections of our understanding [...] we have first raised a dust and then complained we cannot see' (Weick, 2011, p. 141–2). According to Weick, 'the thousand scruples' that spring up in Berkeley's philosopher's minds 'miss half the story. The other half concerns what springs up through our actions' (Ibid., p. 150); in other words, our internal relation or what we make of our experience. People at work are often thrown into pre-existing, organised patterns. They might experience the middle of narratives but remain uneasily vague about their beginnings or ends. According to Weick and organizational scholars Hernes and Maitlis (2010), people whose lives are in a state of flux establish their own temporality and dwell in antenarrative which organizational scholar David Boje (2001) describes as 'fragmented, non-linear, incoherent, collective, unplotted and pre-narrative speculation' (Boje, 2001, p. 1). Weick (2011) argues that is where sensemaking, organizing and discursive devices can make a difference. His colleagues Ann Cunliffe and Christine Coupland agree through their assertion that embodied sensemaking and organizing

potentialities 'emerge when a story begins to come together, identities begin to make sense, identities and actions can be given a sense of narrative rationality and we can connect plot and character (Cunliffe & Coupland, 2012, p. 81).

However, in this PhD I argue that it is important to note that organising and leadership outcomes can also emerge through paying attention to the forces of form created by much smaller, less significant stories in organisational life. Anthropologist Kathleen Stewart (2007) advocates the importance of paying attention to seemingly insignificant moments she describes as ordinary affects.

Ordinary affects are the varied, surging capacities to affect and to be affected that give everyday life the quality of a continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences (Stewart, 2007, p. 4).

Stewart claims that ordinary affects are more significant than might be realised, not in terms of meanings or representations but in the intensities they build, and the thoughts and feelings they provoke. Affect as intensity is a becoming epistemology that provides a way for us to engage with experience 'shorn of some of its humanistic garb' (Brown & Tucker, 2010). Reckwitz (2017) argues that affects are an ingredient of practice. He underlines the valuable role of artefacts which have potential as 'affect generators' (Stewart, 2007; Gherardi, 2017a; Reckwitz, 2017) to enable organisational phenomena to be viewed through a different lens. This is where the value of creative practice artefacts, such as a playscript, have the potential to be affect generators, particularly through a focus on atmosphere attunement where 'life takes shape and gains expression in shared experiences' (Lorimer, 2005, p. 84).

Below I use Reflections titled, *The Wedding Planner* and *The Death of a Salesman* as case studies for demonstrating this sense of attunement. I contend that the visceral, embodied lived organisational experiences detailed in the Reflections are examples of affect generators that clearly had a life-changing impact on *The Wedding Planner*, Elizabeth, and *The Salesman*.

These case studies 'illustrate how ordinary affects circulate, accrue, sediment across bodies, discourses and spaces' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 212). Such affects impact us beyond mere cognitive reasoning as they continue to live on in our flesh, often, for the rest of our lives (Pullen & Rhodes, 2017; Morris, 2018; Probyn, 2010; Gherardi, 2017a). Their relevance to this PhD, therefore, is to show how paying attention to such embodied experiences can create insights that might otherwise be missed.



Reflections
Reflections

The Wedding Planner

It was 2012 at the Australian Public Service Commission, Centre for Leadership, Learning and Development in Canberra. I didn't know Elizabeth well. She was the Executive Director of the Centre and we had met only twice in a community of practice forum with other directors from a range of Australian Public Service departments. Elizabeth and I were meeting to discuss APS-wide policy development regarding 'high talent' programs.

As I sat waiting on the soft two-seater lounge in the ground floor foyer, browsing through glossy event brochures on the neat display stand advertising guest-speaker events being run by the Centre, Elizabeth arrived, shook my hand firmly and ushered me into the adjacent café.

Her timber chair scraping erratically on the concrete floor jarred against the image of her navy-blue blazer and skirt, crisp white shirt and calm, controlled, business-like manner. We began polite introductory pleasantries at our table tucked semi-privately in the corner of the café before Elizabeth, pointing to an events brochure I had been reading, asked:

'Why are you reading that?'

The cover of the brochure featured a large image of a Departmental Head of one of the largest federal government departments, advertising her keynote address for the event.

'That woman is a monster,' Elizabeth said, wringing her hands, her body shifting to a rigid upright position in the timber chair.

'It looked like an interesting topic,' I replied innocently. 'I've never met her' [referring to the Departmental Head].

Without prompting, as if feeling the need to explain, Elizabeth proceeded to tell me, a relative stranger, the entire story of her experience with the Departmental Head, 'Maggie'.

Elizabeth:

My team and I were responsible for facilitating a Leadership and Learning conference for a large contingent of Department Heads across the federal public service. We had gone to a lot of trouble getting the room 'just right' with quality stationery, allocating delegate name plates, checking and doublechecking spelling, etc. This was the 'A List' of leaders in the public service.

As the remaining few conference delegates settled into their seats for the commencement of Day 1, staff left the room to get morning tea organised. I was up the front ensuring the facilitator had everything he needed and fixing up the final few details. I wanted everything to be perfect. I wanted the conference to be a great success. It was a welcoming vibe and spirits appeared to be high until, the chatter amongst delegates subsided and Maggie said, in a loud sarcastic tone for everyone to hear:

"I suppose we can get this thing started when The Wedding Planner has finished fussing around."

The room fell silent as all eyes fixed on me. I was stunned. Totally humiliated. Felt about this small [gesturing with her thumb and forefinger barely apart]. I looked at Maggie and she was smiling, whispering an aside to the person next to her. I quickly finished what I was doing, swept up some papers, rushed out of the room, past the staff setting up morning tea, into the street and burst into tears. I felt physically ill. I just couldn't believe it. How could she humiliate me like that? In front of all the other Department Heads? And why were they all silent? Can you believe not one of them spoke up in my defence?

Elizabeth was visibly shaking. I thought to myself that it was lucky she had chosen a discrete corner table in the café. Elizabeth's eyes began welling with tears as she continued:

I walked back to my office vacillating between nausea, chronic embarrassment and seething anger. I decided that I had to let Maggie know how I was feeling. So, I wrote an email to Maggie. Not emotional. Not aggressive. Just a few lines to say how much careful planning and organisation I had put into that event and how hurt and publicly humiliated I felt by her comment, especially the excessively derogatory tone with which it was delivered. I told her I felt disrespected. And I left it at that.

Elizabeth's sad eyes reddened, her speech became punctuated by a sniffling, dry-throated physical reaction. A single tear flowed down her anguished face, her strained facial expression revealing the deadening painfulness of what happened next:

And can you believe that Maggie never replied? No explanation. No apology. No sense of remorse. It's been over six months and she has still not given me the courtesy of a reply.



Reflections
Reflections

The Death of a Salesman

In the 1990s, it was a common practice for new senior executives in Customs and Border Protection head office in Canberra, especially new executives in the public service (APS), to complete a three-year posting in regional offices so they can experience an operational environment, at the border, where international vessels and aircraft, goods and people arrive and depart, in order to better inform their policy decision-making on their return to Canberra. [In the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.*, the betrayed management character Penelope 'Penny' Adams exclaims via text message to her betraying superior, Julie-Anne 'Jools' Leech, through the malfunctioning revolving doors at FIBS head office in Canberra: 'There are no ships in Canberra Jools!']

While most senior executives did their best to engage with local regional office staff and culture, some like 'Mr Hardwick', a well-groomed actuary with limited experience in public sector management and a quiet, brooding personality that failed to endear him to his colleagues, cut a sad, lonely figure on his rare appearances outside of his own office. When he did venture out amongst staff, Hardwick's one defining feature was that everyone in the office could hear him coming, courtesy of the distinctive strident ominous clack of his leather-soled shiny black shoes marching into the office. His seemingly self-righteous air of pompous

superiority caused most people in the office to stop talking, lower their eyes and keep their heads down; most people, except The Salesman, whose consistent, over-zealous greeting of Hardwick quickly made him the right-hand 'go to' person for the shy senior executive. The Salesman was fundamentally a harmless person, always upbeat and positive, with a 'can do' attitude. The Salesman made no secret of his unashamed desire to rise quickly through management ranks. He often spoke of his older sister who had risen to high rank in the Australian Defence Force and The Salesman appeared determined to compete with her for family bragging rights. Less than two years into his tenure, Hardwick began searching for another job and when he succeeded in securing a State Government senior executive position in the State Treasury Department (STD), he took his right-hand man with him. Farewell celebrations ensued with card signings, endearing speeches, humorous anecdotes, backslapping and good-natured well-wishing by Customs colleagues, most of whom were unaware that The Salesman's confident 'can do' demeanour was secretly insured by an initial period of twelve months leave without pay, keeping the Customs umbilical cord in-tact.

The Salesman had a tough time of it in his new role as a manager leading culture change in the STD where he was confronted with low staff morale, change fatigue and chronic resistance to performance agreements that The Salesman was attempting to implement on behalf of his masters. Throughout his harrowing ordeal, The Salesman maintained his positive demeanour, inviting staff for one-on-one chats over coffee, organising morning teas, offering professional development opportunities, and arranging team-building events.

As the final week before Christmas arrived, The Salesman's seven months of unwavering confidence that he could turn things around appeared to be validated when he arrived at his glass-walled office one morning to find a large wrapped Christmas present on his desk. Glancing over his shoulder to see staff beaming in hushed excitement at their desks, the enriching sense of a holiday festive season buzz filled the office. The Salesman smiled and began opening his gift, knowing that all eyes were watching him. The Christmas ribbon was untied. Slowly peeling back the cellophane tape at strategic points on the green, red and white wrapping paper, The Salesman lifted the lid on the box which had been swaddled in the festive wrapping. Nestled gently inside the box, the yuletide red jacket and pants with fluffy white trim was unmistakable. A card rested inside the lapel of the Santa Claus jacket, on which read the typed words, in bold font:

'And we don't believe in you, either.'

In late January of the following year, a sad, distraught shadow of a man returned to Customs and Border Protection. No human being deserves to be treated with such callous cruelty. In the case of Elizabeth, such workplace bullying could be typically dismissed as abuse of organisational power by a more senior bureaucrat. Elizabeth did not deserve it. The Salesman did not deserve to be bullied either. Yet his bullying was at the hands of organisationally *less powerful* subordinates. So, what is going on here? Like all of us, The Salesman had his failings and vulnerabilities. Finding his place to stand as a leader was possibly one of them, as we shall see in a quotation from Robert Jackall's book *Moral Mazes* (2010), retold in Chapter 4 of this PhD where I examine how creative practice can assist in surfacing the ordinary effects of organisational life. For now, perhaps The Salesman's predicament is best examined through the lens of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, in which regional commander Ken Graham (KG) employs a quote from comedian 'philosopher', Groucho Marx: 'Those are my principles, and if you don't like them, well, I have others.'

It is true that such quotes closely align with the naked ambition of The Salesman. But does being perceived as a hapless sycophant mean he deserved to be publicly demeaned and ostracised? What would have driven people to think it reasonable to treat a fellow human being in that way? Was The Salesman simply 'fair game' because he was one of 'them' in management? Was it a case of powerless subordinates finally taking a stand and finding their voice? Or might it have merely been a simple, linear cause-and-effect response to a 'problem manager', the enemy; in other words, a *Local War on Terror* (LWOT) in an organisational theatre of war?



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 3 Scene 1

[HR Manager Rhonda 'RADAR' Radari visits the docks to meet with VICTOR to discuss his future. In the background, MORRIS can be seen working hard on shipping containers (in the form of coloured LEGO blocks) reconciliation while other staff kick a football in the warehouse. RADAR enters stage left and is almost hit by the football as it sprays off the side of the boot of one of the staff.]

RHONDA *[condescendingly]*: So, this is the 'crack' waterside operations squad, is it?

[VICTOR rushes in from stage right, motioning the staff to put away the ball.]

VICTOR *[apologetically, holding out his hand in a welcome handshake gesture]*: Sorry about that. You OK?

[VICTOR guides RHONDA towards the office area of the warehouse, as staff rush back to work.]

RHONDA *[glaring back at staff]*: Professional outfit you're running here, Victor!

VICTOR: Started at 6am ... *[pause]* ... downtime team morale. So, what's this meeting about Rhonda?

RHONDA: I'll cut to the chase, Victor *[tossing her head towards the warehouse]*, before I get attacked again. As you know, major budget pressures due to asylum seeker boat arrivals in northern Australia have forced a review of performance across FIBS. Workload and performance statistics are under scrutiny in all areas and everyone is expected to share the load in terms of budget savings.

VICTOR *[tentatively]*: Right ... so what exactly are you saying, Rhonda?

RHONDA *[officially]*: The statistics are clear – Waterside Control is overstaffed and needs to shed resources.

VICTOR: What statistics? Waterside Control is not overstaffed. Our staffing hasn't increased for five years. Shipping container traffic has doubled in that time, especially imports. We're getting smashed.

RHONDA *[turning her head back towards the warehouse]*: Is that so? Kicking footballs during paid worktime—

VICTOR: They were on a break!

RHONDA *[dismissively]*: As I was saying, statistics indicate that a resourcing correction is required in Waterside Control.

VICTOR *[impatiently]*: We can't afford to lose staff.

RHONDA *[unemotional]*: Most staff will be fine. But I wouldn't say the same about you.

VICTOR: Me?

RHONDA *[bluntly]*: Victor, I have to advise you that your position has been abolished and you will be placed onto the redeployment list.

VICTOR: Abolished? Why? On what grounds? I don't believe it.

RHONDA *[calmly unmoved]*: As there are no vacant positions elsewhere, the redeployment list is the only option at this stage. We will find you a position as soon as a suitable vacancy emerges that matches your skill set.

VICTOR *[the impact dawning upon him]*: But I can't afford to leave Waterside Control.

RHONDA: You will still be employed.

VICTOR: But I need the shift penalties.

RHONDA: You will still have a job, just not on shift-work.

[An elderly Vietnamese couple shuffle across the stage pushing a loudly squeaking, rickety old cart. The female member of the couple stops to open an envelope, removing a letter and money from inside. She kisses the letter, holds it to her chest, and lets out a soft, muffled cry.]

VICTOR *[staring solemnly into space]*: My parents ... *[pause]* ... They live on the money I send them.

[RHONDA remains unmoved.]

VICTOR: I need shift penalties to help them.

RHONDA: Lots of staff in FIBS work 9 to 5.

VICTOR *[distantly, as if RHONDA is not present]*: They won't survive.

RHONDA: Shift-work is not a right, Victor.

[VICTOR, silently, both hands holding his head turns pleadingly towards RHONDA.]

RHONDA *[unmoved]*: As I said, you still have a job and we will find you something, either in FIBS or at another federal agency, as soon as a suitable vacancy is found.

VICTOR: What'll I be doing until then?

RHONDA: General duties as directed.

VICTOR: Where?

RHONDA: A spare desk in Corporate and tasks will be allocated to you as they arise.

VICTOR: Dogsboddy, eh?

[RHONDA remains unmoved.]

VICTOR *[with rising suspicion]*: Do Gino and Will know about this?

RHONDA *[unemotional]*: All directors and managers have been consulted in the decision-making process.

VICTOR: I'm being singled out!

RHONDA *[unemotional]*: A number of staff have been impacted by this resourcing correction initiative.

VICTOR: What other staff?

RHONDA: I am not at liberty to divulge the names.

VICTOR [*defiantly*]: I'm the only bunny.

RHONDA [*unemotional*]: No, Victor, your position is not the only one to be abolished. You must not feel victimised. You must remain positive about your future.

VICTOR: What other positions? Waterside Control won't survive a bunch of staff cuts.

RHONDA [*checking her paperwork*]: There are only two positions impacted in Waterside Control. Yours and one other.

VICTOR: Who is it then?

[*RHONDA remains tight-lipped.*]

[As lights dim, the spotlight rises on the warehouse where MORRIS can be seen busily working solo among the shipping containers. The backdrop changes to a full bank of computer screens, images and data indiscriminately rotate across the screens. An airhorn boom salute, similar to the airhorn boom sounding the departure and arrival of yachts in the Sydney-to-Hobart annual yacht race, announces the presence of 'THE SYSTEM', an unseen character whose intimidating robotic voice, in rich, deep timbre, can be heard as MORRIS stands alone, centre stage, in the spotlight, staring straight ahead into the audience.]

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: Your skills are no longer relevant for the dynamic world in which we now operate.

MORRIS [*head swirling around in search of the voice*]: What?

THE SYSTEM: Your services no longer meet our requirements.

MORRIS [*head swivelling*]: Who are you?

THE SYSTEM: I am The System.

MORRIS: What system?

THE SYSTEM [*ignoring the question*]: The world has changed. Your services no longer meet our requirements.

MORRIS [*swivelling around, scanning the stage*]: But, but ... I don't understand.

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: We currently have to manage a globalised world of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity.

MORRIS: What's that go to do with me? I'm not a manager.

THE SYSTEM: Management of such a world requires adaptive employees with more diverse skills.

MORRIS [*puzzled*]: What skills?

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: Soft skills.

MORRIS: But I have soft skills.

THE SYSTEM *[authoritatively]*: No.

MORRIS *[adamantly]*: I do more container unpacks and ship's manifest reconciliations than anyone around here.

THE SYSTEM *[authoritatively]*: They're hard skills.

MORRIS *[faithfully]*: No, they're not. They're easy. Soft skills are the easy ones.

THE SYSTEM *[definitively]*: No, soft skills are the hard ones.

[MORRIS scratches his head as the spotlight fades.]

[Lights go up. GINO is walking across the stage with PENNY. Several passages of fast-moving action follow.]

GINO: ... so what I'm saying Penny is that Hope needs to keep out of operational business. I appreciate that Hope is only doing her job as a finance manager. Fair enough. But she doesn't fully understand operational decision-making, based on 'need to know' principles. Hope doesn't have the intel clearance.

PENNY: I hear you Gino. Hope can be like a dog with a bone sometimes. Leave it to me. I'll speak with her and get her to back off.

[A heavily pregnant ELLIE enters stage right to speak with PENNY.]

ELLIE *[distressed]*: Penny can I have a word please? I've just been talking to Hope and she said I can't come back from maternity leave as part-time.

GINO *[looking ELLIE up and down]*: Thanks Penny. Guess I'll leave you to it. Appreciate your help.

[GINO exits stage right.]

ELLIE *[oblivious to GINO's departure]*: Hope said that you've made the decision that we already have too many staff working part-time.

PENNY: We do Ellie! You've only got to look around the office and see empty desks everywhere, everyday!

ELLIE: But I'm having my first baby! I can't leave my baby five days a week. We can't afford the extra childcare costs.

PENNY *[authoritatively]*: Yes you can, Ellie. You'll be earning more from a full-time wage. Stop stressing. It'll work itself out. You, of all people, know the impact of too many part-time staff.

ELLIE: Me?

PENNY: Aren't you the one who always opens up each morning then stays back to do the daily reconciliation?

ELLIE *[indignant]*: Yes, I am! And I've done that for the past two years! Everyone else goes home at 2pm for school pick-up!

PENNY *[confidently]*: So, you can see what I mean then. We just have to get the workforce balance right, but we can't afford to have any more part-time staff.

ELLIE *[exasperated]*: Sandra and Tamika are part-timers and they don't even have school-age kids anymore! Their kids are in their twenties!

PENNY *[calmly]*: It will all work itself out Ellie. Don't stress.

[PENNY guides ELLIE away, exit stage right.]

[ROWAN BEAN and GINO enter, stage right, and walk across the stage.]

GINO: ... as I was saying, Rowan, we've built into Will's PIFAL a one-week deployment in Intelligence to update his skills. Have to follow through with it otherwise KG and 'Gerrard' Mander will be banging on about why we didn't do it.

ROWAN *[teasing]*: But what's in it for me Gino?

GINO *[meeting the challenge]*: Freebie extra resource ...

ROWAN: And ...?

GINO: And, I'll buy you coffees for the week ...

ROWAN *[smiling]*: Latte. Large. When will we see him?

GINO: Next week if it suits? The sooner we get it ticked off the better.

ROWAN: Deal.

[Exit stage left.]

[Enter, stage left, WILL and FATIMA AWSE ABDULLAH, wearing a hijab, who is showing WILL around the Intelligence office.]

FATIMA *[politely, moving towards her workstation where a full in-tray awaits]*: ... and that's basically how the Intel office operates each day. Information reports come in, we process them, give them a rating then, if warranted, forward them to the guys in targeting who you just met.

WILL *[looking around, sounding a little bored]*: Hasn't really changed much since I last worked here, ten years ago. Whoever got into work first would log on and we'd all share the same computer for the day. *[Placing his hand on the desk where FATIMA sits.]* Your desk?

FATIMA *[smiling and beginning typing, hinting about the need to get on with her work]*: More things change, the more they stay the same. That's the public service for you.

WILL *[barely engaged]*: Too true ... Fatima Orse ... is it? How do you say your name again?

FATIMA *[smiling and staring at her screen]*: It's Fatima Awse Abdullah. Sort of like 'house' but without the 'h'.

WILL *[humourlessly]*: Think I said 'horse' but 'without the 'h'. Why didn't your parents spell it as it sounds? Make life easier.

FATIMA *[blushing with a polite smile towards WILL]*: That's OK. People always get confused. It was my grandmother's name back in Iraq.

WILL *[bluntly, in song-song voice]*: Awse-tralians all let us rejoice ... *[smiling]*. Good way to remember it, I reckon.

FATIMA *[blushing, quickly grabbing some documents and rising to her feet]*: That's fine. If you'll excuse me, I've just got to take these papers downstairs to the Investigation team.

[FATIMA exits stage right. WILL glances quickly around, then sits down at the unlocked workstation of FATIMA.]

ACT 3 Scene 2

[VICTOR can be seen cycling across the stage into work downstream on a bike track alongside the river as the new FIBS sports cruiser with GINO, wearing a cap with 'Skippergino' above the peak, at the helm heads upstream on its first mission. The large screen shows VICTOR staring in dumbfounded amazement at the sight of a FIBS vessel on local waterways.]

GINO *[steering confidently]*: Piece o' cake, really. Bloke who sold it said it was smooth as. Oscar made it sound complicated. Perfect day to be on the water, cruisin' up the Cale River? Beats the office.

WILL: Long as we find those drugs you reckon we'll find. Draw a blank, there'll be some explainin' to do.

GINO: Relax, Will. Trust me. Got the anonymous info into the Intel system, didn't you? Leave the rest to me. Just keep your eyes peeled for an old wharf shed or somethin'.

WILL *[surveying the river]*: Think there's an old shed about a 'k' up the river. See it from the bike path. Deserted old Sea Scouts hut. Fallin' to bits. Might even be *in* the river by now.

[GINO and WILL cruise silently, eyes searching along the riverbank.]

GINO *[pointing, assuredly, up river]*: There.

WILL *[uncertain]*: Might be the shed I had in mind but ...

GINO *[ignoring WILL, eyes fixed on the old shed]*: I'm gunna pull in next to that old pylon. Grab the rope and tie us on.

[WILL heads out of the cabin to unravel the rope. Tosses it towards the top of the post.]

GINO *[grabbing a small bag]*: Stay here Will.

WILL *[excitedly]*: Can't I come?

[GINO shoots WILL a 'do as you're told' glare. WILL waits. Seconds pass.]

GINO *[grinning]*: What'd I tell ya, Will? Come and have a look at this. Grab the narco test kit.

WILL *[scurrying]*: What is it?

GINO *[confidently pointing to the 'hide']*: There. Under those two planks.

WILL *[struggling to contain his excitement, holding up a small plastic bag]*: White powder. What d'ya reckon, 10 grams?

GINO: Bit less. Got the test kit?

WILL *[pulling on blue rubber gloves, carefully transferring a few grains into the test kit, shaking the contents then holding up to the light to see the chemical reaction]*: Jesus! Cocaine. Its fucking cocaine Gino!

GINO *[smiling]*: Looks like that anonymous info was on the money, Will.

WILL: Any wonder they call you 'The Cocaine King'. Sure got a nose for it ...

ACT 3 Scene 3

[Spotlight shines on the left of stage where the narrators, Goods Arrivals supervisors DEE and TAYLOR, are seated on two stools speaking directly to the audience. Playing on a screen behind them, to the right are images of heavily laden container ships and 'high-rise' container stacks on wharves.]

DEE: Let us paint the picture for you. The rise in imported goods has quadrupled in the past ten years since the advent of tariff reductions and free trade agreements.

[TAYLOR stares silently.]

DEE: It's not just in Goods, either. Volumes are through the roof everywhere. Staffing's stretched to the limit. Not gunna lie to you: Morale is absolutely crap at the moment.

[TAYLOR stands, head bowed, hands in pockets, scuffing a demoralised boot on the floor.]

DEE *[flat]*: Don't blame staff for taking sickies. People are burnt out. Absenteeism's rife.

[TAYLOR bends down, cups his hands together and scoops up a handful of sand.]

DEE: Oscar might change things. Couldn't be worse than his predecessor – coffee, 'networking' and jumping whenever Wally said 'jump'. Wally never comes near us. Only interested in making a name for himself with Canberra and impressing KG. Dealing with *[gesturing quotation marks]* 'problem children' is his specialty. Zero tolerance for underperformance. *[TAYLOR raises his arms, opens his fingers slightly and stares at the sand trickling through.]*

DEE: Hands the poor souls over to Rhonda Radari in HR. 'Radar' they call her. Like a search spotlight in a war-time prison guard tower, scanning the prison yard for enemy rebels and low-life troublemakers.

[The spotlight swirls around the audience – stopping occasionally on individual audience members, for unnerving, humorous effect – before returning to DEE and TAYLOR on stage.]

DEE: Brutal. Literally, 'take no prisoners'. Between them, Radar and Wally aim to get at least one 'scalp' per year and they don't mind advertising their performance management record amongst peers.

DEE: Problem is, right or wrong, the sackings or *[gesturing quotation marks]* 'reassignments' make staffing levels worse. Never replaced.

[TAYLOR defiantly kicks sand out of the box.]

DEE: Staff have had enough. They want action!

DEE: Oscar agrees. He's pushed Wally to meet out here with us to hear our grievances, first-hand, rather than having them relayed through Oscar. Team leaders are 'up-in-arms' so Wally had better be ready for a fight.

[Lights go up on the right-hand side of the stage as DEE and TAYLOR walk over to a meeting table joined by a number of other uniformed team leaders. A professional-looking WALLY enters the gathering, his expensive suit, bold striped business shirt, striking red tie and shiny black shoes lending an air of sophistication to the examination warehouse environment. Team leaders are shifting nervously in their seats, an air of expectancy pervades the room as volatility bubbles below the surface.]

DEE *[innocently]*: Oscar not coming?

WALLY *[calmly]*: Been called into a freight forwarder's meeting, at short notice. It's great to finally get a chance to escape the office and sit down with you all.

[WALLY looks sideways to see TAYLOR writing notes.]

WALLY *[smiling]*: Minutes?

[TAYLOR nods nervously.]

WALLY *[smiling warmly, opening his leather-bound notebook compendium and retrieving a Mont Blanc pen from the inside of his suit coat pocket]*: And here I was thinking this was a nice informal staff catch-up.

DEE: Well, it is Wally. We just want to all be on the same page.

WALLY *[smiling again towards TAYLOR]*: You can relax Tyler. I'm happy to take some notes.

[TAYLOR looks deflated.]

DEE: It's Taylor.

WALLY *[ignoring the correction]*: Do it all the time. I actually don't mind taking minutes. Makes my EA pretty happy, I can assure you! Keeps me occupied during long, boring management meetings, if you know what I mean.

[TAYLOR puts his pen down and looks to DEE to commence proceedings.]

DEE *[hesitantly]*: So, Wally, what we were hoping to discuss with you is ... um ... our chronic staff shortages which we've been struggling with for a long time now ...

WALLY: Before we do ... KG and Penny Adams have asked Directors to get staff to check your security passes. They're cross-checking data and need to know if your pass has expired and needs renewing.

[All check passes on lanyards around their necks.]

[TAYLOR shows his expired pass to DEE.]

DEE *[to TAYLOR]*: Expired four months ago. Mine too – last month. How? Why? We'll need new photos ...

WALLY *[uninterested]*: They've just lost some data records, that's all ...

DEE: Lost? What d'ya mean lost?

WALLY [*unconcerned*]: They were moving office.

DEE: They're 'Corporate Security'.

WALLY: It's not a big deal ... Need our help to get their records back on-track. Staff access passes must be valid. Just email me your details, the expiry date and I'll let them know.

DEE [*shaking her head*]: OK, we'll email our pass details. Now, staffing? Wally?

WALLY [*warmly animated, looking into the eyes of all around the table*]: Can you believe the impact that tariff reductions and free trade has had on increasing imports? Unbelievable! Great for the economy, for business. Much cheaper prices for 'mum and dad' consumers too but it's put an enormous strain on FIBS resources, hasn't it?

DEE: We've been feelin' the pinch for years, Wally; so much worse now ...

WALLY [*conciliatory and with empathy*]: I've been closely monitoring rising absenteeism stats for months, so I understand the impact it's having on staff. I don't blame people for being off sick.

[*TAYLOR looks surprised.*]

WALLY: It must be so hard for staff trying to find a work-life balance when there are not enough hours in the day to process seemingly ever-increasing import volumes.

DEE [*surprisingly encouraged*]: Becoming impossible to manage day-to-day. Sickies don't help.

WALLY [*with a sense of shared relief*]: Well, the good news, folks, is that there is light at the end of the tunnel.

DEE: Really?

WALLY [*upbeat*]: You know the group of trainees currently in training? I think some of them did a placement out here?

[*TAYLOR nods expectantly.*]

WALLY [*proudly*]: I've been in negotiations with Penny Adams and Rhonda Radari and it looks like we will be getting fifteen new staff when this group of trainees graduate.

DEE [*excitedly*]: FIFTEEN?! That's awesome!

[*Excited, animated discussion around the table ensues as all celebrate the staffing relief coming their way. Unscripted group discussion continues until WALLY stands, folds his leather compendium under his arm, shakes hands with those present and exits stage right. Lights dim briefly then rise again with DEE and TAYLOR walking across the stage with OSCAR, advising him of their fifteen new graduate recruits. OSCAR stops abruptly, centre stage.*]

OSCAR [*incredulous*]: What? And you believed him?

[*TAYLOR and DEE give each other a sideways look of concerned confusion.*]

OSCAR: Our chances of getting fifteen new staff are about as good as Canberra closing up shop and redeploying staff back to where 'border' security work actually takes place – in regional offices at the national 'border'. It'll never happen.

[*Silence, as TAYLOR and DEE think to themselves, OSCAR continues.*]

OSCAR: It has always amazed me that there are more staff in Canberra – an inland political centre – than in any of the ‘border’ regions. And most of them are in management or the senior executive – or servicing the senior executive. There’s a massive chunk of FIBS budget, right there.

DEE [*wishfully*]: Wally was pretty confident ... maybe he knows something you don’t, Oscar ..?

OSCAR: Doubt it. I mean, I don’t want to disappoint you guys but ... all the media pressure is on rising passenger numbers at airports, meaning longer queues, processing times ...

DEE [*flat*]: ... and on your old marine unit, Oscar – the ‘FIBS Navy’ – that’s where our budget is going.

OSCAR [*calmly*]: I know, I know, Dee, and I don’t disagree. All I’m saying is that social media and talkback radio will always blame FIBS when people are held up at airports so I’m certain those graduate trainees will be going there, not here. Airport arrivals are really under the pump too y’know.

DEE [*distracted, uncertain, gutted*]: How could Wally do that to us? Definitely sounded like he really understood, really cared about us ...

[Silence falls on the stage ... Pause ... Then all three, slowly and disconsolately, exit stage left. Lights fade.]

ACT 3 Scene 4

[International Women’s Day breakfast. A select group of FIBS representatives stand at a breakfast bar clapping along politely while a group of schoolgirl gymnasts go through their routine to the tune of ‘Sisters Are Doin’ It For Themselves’. The group comprises PENNY, RHONDA, HOPE, SANDRA and TAMIKA, DEE and KG.]

KG [*animated*]: They’re very talented.

HOPE: So nimble, flexible.

KG: A lot like me in my youth.

RHONDA [*wryly*]: Standing ovations? Why don’t you get up there and show us, Ken?

KG [*feigning a grimace, clutching his leg*]: Hamstring. Always a great day this. Pity there are only eight of us. *[To PENNY]* We paid for ten?

PENNY: Fatima and Ellie were supposed to be coming. Ellie’s got a doctor’s appointment. Not exactly sure about Fatima.

RHONDA [*knowingly*]: Otherwise engaged, I’d suggest ...

HOPE: What do you mean by that Rhonda?

RHONDA [*ignoring HOPE’s question*]: We asked a few of the guys to come in their place. Wally and Rowan said it was too short notice. Gino has another ‘hot’ operation they’re working on.

HOPE [*shaking her head, turning to speak with SANDRA and TAMIKA*]: So, it was great that you guys could come to breakfast today, especially on your day off.

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: Wouldn't miss a free breakfast and Penny said we'd get paid for attending.

HOPE: Have either of you had a chance to rethink returning to full-time so that Ellie can work part-time after her baby is born?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: Not possible.

HOPE: Why not, though? I mean, you're both young enough – what, mid-forties? – and kids in their twenties, aren't they? Do they still live at home?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: Until recently, yes.

HOPE: But they don't anymore?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: They still bring their washing home for me to do.

HOPE: But you don't have day-to-day responsibility for them?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: That's not the point?

HOPE: What is the point?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: Work–life balance.

HOPE: Really? *[pause]* You know how much stress this is putting Ellie under, don't you?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: That's not my doing. I had to struggle when I was a young mum.

HOPE *[genuinely unsure]*: But you got to work part-time when you had young kids, didn't you?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[proudly, in unison]*: We were the pioneers of part-time work in FIBS. Young mums today have us to thank, fighting for part-time rights for working mothers.

HOPE: I'm not sure Ellie would be thanking you right now.

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: What happens to Ellie is a decision for you and Penny. It has got nothing to do with me.

HOPE: But now that you've enjoyed the benefits, don't you want to see other new mums, and dads, benefit too? *[Pause]* I mean, couldn't you each work at least one extra day to make it a four-day week instead of three?

[SANDRA and TAMIKA shrug, in unison.]

HOPE *[pressing]*: Say, Sandra, you could work the Tuesday you currently have off and Tamika, you could work the Thursday? And you'd both still have Fridays off.

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison]*: Not possible.

HOPE *[incredulous]*: Why?

SANDRA and TAMIKA *[in unison, but with SANDRA motioning a golf swing and TAMIKA extending her arms in operatic style]*: Pennant golf. Choir practice.

HOPE *[in a tone of resignation]*: Work–life balance?

[SANDRA and TAMIKA smile and nod, in unison.]

HOPE *[frustrated, turning to RHONDA and PENNY]*: Lost cause. They've got no idea the stress Ellie's under. The squeeze is on with the downsizing so Ellie's beside herself ... she's really starting to sound depressed.

RHONDA *[blunt, emotionless]*: She's got the EAP.

HOPE *[tilting her head sideways]*: Three sessions ..?

RHONDA *[annoyed]*: With an extra two ... *if required*.

HOPE: Five sessions with a staff counsellor is not going to solve Ellie's problems.

RHONDA: If they can't fix it in five, they're not trying.

HOPE: Really?

RHONDA: Return on investment: ZERO. Total waste of time and money. Ellie just needs to harden up. END of STORY ... *[pause]* ... She's done resilience training – start using it.

[Brief silence before HOPE changes the subject.]

HOPE *[curious]*: So, Rhonda, what was that earlier comment about FATIMA?

[RHONDA looks toward PENNY for a response.]

PENNY *[hesitantly]*: Well ... not for public consumption ... let's just say that FATIMA has ... um ... come to the attention of IT security.

HOPE *[surprised]*: IT audits?

[PENNY and RHONDA both nod in an unimpressed manner.]

RHONDA: Silly girl. Should know better.

PENNY: VicPol complaint.

HOPE: Police? About what?

RHONDA: Roads Authority database misuse. Young woman got stalked. Her policeman boyfriend complained. They traced it back to us.

HOPE *[in disbelief]*: Why would Fatima do that?

PENNY: Pleading innocence. Stressed to the eyeballs. But the system audit trail is conclusive. The woman's personal details were accessed by Fatima on her log-on ID.

HOPE: Or by someone else ...

RHONDA *[firmly]*: IT have completed a thorough investigation; interviewed all possible users; no one in Intel knows anything about it. They're all panicking but adamant.

PENNY *[as if to demonstrate the thoroughness of the investigation]*: Even Will Cruise was grilled. He worked in Intel, around that time, albeit briefly.

HOPE: Wouldn't have liked that. How'd he take it, Will?

PENNY: Not happy. Gino was up in arms, too. Told KG he'd take it to the CEO. Disrespectful to managers.

HOPE *[forlornly]*: Unbelievable ... so sad.

RHONDA: Do the crime ...

[The backdrop changes to a full bank of computer screens, images and data indiscriminately rotate across the screens. An airhorn boom salute announces the presence of THE SYSTEM, an unseen character whose deep, intimidating, robotic voice can be heard as FATIMA stands alone, centre stage, in the spotlight, staring straight ahead into the audience. MORRIS makes a brief appearance, swivelling around, scanning the stage as if searching for the identity of THE SYSTEM.]

THE SYSTEM: The audit trail is conclusive.

FATIMA *[steadfastly]*: It wasn't me.

THE SYSTEM: The complainant's details were accessed by you.

FATIMA: They were not!

THE SYSTEM: It was your log-on.

FATIMA: It was someone else!

THE SYSTEM: A thorough investigation has been conducted.

FATIMA: Please believe me!

THE SYSTEM: Breaches of IT Security policy ...

FATIMA *[incredulous]*: I don't know anything about it!

THE SYSTEM: ... and section 7(1)(b) of the APS code of conduct.

FATIMA *[pleading]*: Honestly.

The SYSTEM: The police have been notified of our findings.

FATIMA: PO-LICE?

THE SYSTEM: A decision regarding possible criminal prosecution will be made in due course.

FATIMA *[scrunching herself into a tortured, tightly knotted ball]*: This can't be happening ...

[Spotlight fades.]

ACT 3 Scene 5

[Okie Dokie? Day morning tea for mental health and wellbeing. Much frivolity in the lunch room as KG, PENNY, RHONDA, HOPE, ROWAN, BRENDAN and other managers and staff, resplendent in bright yellow T-shirts, gather together to celebrate Okie Dokie? Day. SANDRA and TAMIKA, also in their yellow T-shirts, sit in an inflatable swimming pool filled, not with water but, with a sea of brightly coloured plastic balls that they can be seen tossing in the air. WALLY surprises everyone by arriving in a stylish bright-yellow three-piece suit, complete with a black-and-yellow Okie Dokie? Day scarf fashioned into a cravat. Standing centre stage with cups of tea are VICTOR, MORRIS, FATIMA, DEE, TAYLOR, ELLIE, GINO and WILL. OSCAR arrives, not sure what to make of the scene.]

PENNY *[tossing a yellow T-shirt in OSCAR's direction]*: Here, this should fit you, Oscar. It's a large.

[OSCAR catches the yellow T-shirt and hesitantly begins to pull it over his own shirt. HOPE is standing nearby, holding her yellow shirt in her hand.]

RHONDA *[to HOPE]*: Come on Hope. Be a team player. Join the 'yellow army' [laughs].

KG *[excitedly]*: Welcome everyone to what has become an important day on our corporate calendar Okie Dokie? Day! As we all know, our people are our most valuable asset so the health and wellbeing of our staff is of paramount importance.

[Turning to look for JUDY who is acting as 'photographer for the day' and busily taking photos of SANDRA and TAMIKA reclining playfully in the inflatable pool.]

KG *[pointing at WALLY]*: Judy, make sure you get lots of snaps of Wally. Everyone in Canberra will love seeing Wally in his full Okie Dokie? Day regalia.

[JUDY turns to photograph a beaming WALLY, posing in his tailored yellow suit and cravat.]

KG *[returning his attention to the gathering]*: Anyway, as I was saying, we need to 'walk the talk' when it comes to the wellbeing of our people and one way of doing that is my biannual Regional Award for Key Result Area Performance (K.R.A.P.).

RHONDA *[sarcastically]*: Bravo, Ken.

KG *[oblivious to the barb]*: The two nominees for the mid-year award are Gino and his Waterside Control team for operational innovation resulting in an increased hit rate in cocaine detections and Penny for her budget savings through reduction in Corporate staffing – the new operating model, business transformation initiative.

ROWAN *[feigned excitement]*: Drum roll.

KG: Both are worthy nominees but there can only be one winner. And I'm pleased to announce that Penny has been selected as the winner of the Regional K.R.A.P. award. Well done, Penny.

[PENNY, blushing, comes forward to collect the award to scattered applause. GINO immediately exits stage left, with WILL closely behind him.]

KG *[excitedly]*: Help yourselves to the food everyone and enjoy an Okie Dokie? Day!

[Much activity occurs with laughter, coloured ball tossing and animated greetings by yellow T-shirt-wearing staff to each other and to the staff standing centre stage.]

[The refrain: 'Oh, are you Okie Dokie?' resonates around the room as those in yellow form a playful circle around those in the centre and a loud singing chorus to the tune of the 'Hokey Pokey' begins. As the circling throng moves around the stationary central group, it forms into a bright-yellow conga line and bounces to a boisterous exit, stage right. The central group quietly place down their cups and leave the stage, all in different directions, as the fading sounds of 'Oh, are you Okie Dokie?' drift through the air. Lights fade.]

[The sound of Adele's song 'Rumour Has It' is playing the background as lights rise on a split stage with VICTOR quietly cleaning up behind a wall in the boardroom kitchenette after the Okie Dokie? Day event.]

<https://youtu.be/uK3MLITL5Ko?t=168> *[the musical section starts then fades at 3:45mins.]*

[OSCAR, still wearing his yellow T-shirt, enters the empty boardroom holding a tray of cups and saucers he is returning to help with the packing up. OSCAR stops and stares up at KG's artwork. HOPE enters the room placing a tray on the side table and moves towards OSCAR.]

HOPE *[whispering, huddling up next to OSCAR]*: You feeling as awkward as I am?

OSCAR *[turning his head, feeling HOPE's body against him]*: 'Bout what?

HOPE *[stepping back, sensing OSCAR's embarrassment, pointing next door]*: That ridiculous charade out there.

[OSCAR flicks his head back, in silent agreement.]

HOPE: God it was embarrassing.

OSCAR: Wish I'd left with Gino. Could've avoided the whole show.

HOPE *[taking the tray of cups from OSCAR and placing it on the side table next to her tray]*: Not sure I'd risk doing anything with Gino.

OSCAR: Why? ... I mean ... he's well respected, isn't he? ... Switched on, calls the shots?

HOPE: Don't know ... *[pause]* ... Haven't been here long enough ... Something suss about him ... *[with sudden urgency]* but don't tell him I said that!

[Tilting his head, training his ears in the direction of the voices, VICTOR stealthily moves closer to the kitchenette wall to eavesdrop on the conversation.]

OSCAR: What's the great conspiracy theory then?

HOPE *[playfully]*: Oh! It's not a conspiracy theory ... *[pause]* ... Just a hunch ... *[pause, smiles]* ... Call it female intuition.

OSCAR *[taking a bite out of a leftover party pie]*: What's your hunch?

HOPE *[moving in close again, with a sense of intrigue]*: Well, apparently – before my time at FIBS – there were lots of rumours flying around about Gino.

[OSCAR takes a step back.]

HOPE *[straightening-up]*: Don't know detail. No one talks about it, probably 'cos he's in such a senior role now.

OSCAR: Does your female intuition allow you to consider that the rumours died because they might not be true?

HOPE *[smiling, seeming to enjoy OSCAR's playfulness]*: Yees ... I ... know ... There's nothing like a good rumour is there? ... *[pause]* ... I'm sure he's doing something shifty with his budget ... Penny's told me to keep out of operational matters ... *[pause]* ... Gotta be invoice shifting or splitting or something ... *[pause]* ... Heard anything?

OSCAR: Nah. Mind my own business.

[OSCAR returns his gaze to the oldest piece of artwork. HOPE picks up the cue to change subjects.]

HOPE: Hans Holbein. The Ambassadors. 1533.

[OSCAR looks impressed.]

HOPE: Breadth subject in my Commerce degree. Art History ... *[pause]* ... KG thinks it's about successful leadership: 'Heroic men, owning their destiny, conquering their world!'

OSCAR: Isn't it? I mean ... they look pretty chuffed with themselves.

HOPE: Jean de Dinterville, French Ambassador to England and Georges de Selve, a powerful bishop in Venice and the Vatican. Only in their late twenties but old Johnny de D. commissioned Holbein to paint the portrait as a mark of their power and success. Hans, God love him, got well paid but had other ideas.

OSCAR: Meaning?

HOPE: Unbeknown to his wealthy subjects, Holbein was making a statement about humility or, in other words, a kind of dumb arrogance. The folly of men thinking they control the world.

OSCAR: Sounds familiar.

HOPE: You've only got to look at the floating image in the foreground to see what Holbein was saying *[HOPE gently elbows OSCAR and points irreverently to the foreground]*. C'mon, let's get some more trays.

[OSCAR briefly leans in to study the work more closely, shaking his head as he and HOPE exit stage left. Lights fade. A single spotlight centres on the Holbein painting as VICTOR creeps quietly from behind the kitchenette wall into the empty boardroom to view the painting.]

[As VICTOR quietly views the painting from various angles, a theatrical moment of 'magic' occurs. A hologram of the 'floating' anamorphic image in Holbein's painting comes to life, rising out of the canvas to reveal to VICTOR – and to the audience over whom the hologram floats – the latent message of the artist.]



ACT 3 Scene 6

[Lights rise. TAYLOR and DEE, seated on stools facing the audience, remain silent. VICTOR sits at his desk on the unlit sidelines of the stage, watching, but not involved in the action. An image of the sports cruiser appears on the large screen behind them. GINO and RHONDA RADARI enter stage left, rush across the stage, laughing with adolescent excitement, beach towels over their shoulders, carrying a baguette, a wheel of cheese, two champagne flutes and a bottle of champagne, then exit stage right.]

[TAYLOR sits unmoved, as though nothing will surprise him anymore, his gaze following GINO and RHONDA across the stage.]

DEE *[deadpan, staring straight ahead into the audience]*: Inter-branch liaison ... apparently.

[Silence. Both DEE and TAYLOR sit staring at the audience.]

DEE *[deadpan]*: You get a letter from Corporate Security?

[TAYLOR nods.]

DEE: Formal warning too?

[TAYLOR nods.]

[Lights dim, leaving one solitary spotlight on TAYLOR and DEE seated on their stools. The backdrop changes to a full bank of computer screens, images and data indiscriminately rotate across the screens. An airhorn boom salute announces the presence of THE SYSTEM, an unseen character whose deep, intimidating, robotic voice can be heard as TAYLOR and DEE sit quietly in the spotlight, staring straight ahead into the audience. MORRIS makes a brief appearance, swivelling around, scanning the stage as if searching for the identity of THE SYSTEM.]

THE SYSTEM: Possessing an invalid staff identity access card is a serious breach of Corporate Security policy.

DEE *[steadfastly]*: Yes, but we were the ones who told you about it.

THE SYSTEM: We have considered a range of sanctions ...

DEE *[in quiet disbelief]*: Sanctions? We self-reported.

THE SYSTEM *[authoritatively]*: ... and, on this occasion, it has been decided to issue you with a formal warning.

DEE *[incredulous]*: But you guys in Security lost all the data.

THE SYSTEM *[authoritatively]*: The onus is on the employee to maintain a valid identity card at all times.

DEE *[in quiet disbelief]*: Had we not self-reported, you would never have known.

THE SYSTEM *[authoritatively]*: Canberra have been advised and the matter will be permanently recorded on your personal file.

DEE *[quietly downbeat]*: And what about those who lost the data?

THE SYSTEM *[ignoring the question]*: You are hereby formally warned that more serious sanctions will apply if any further breaches are detected against you. Do you understand?

DEE *[defeated]*: Yes.

[TAYLOR nods.]

THE SYSTEM: You should consider yourselves fortunate to have received such a lenient sanction for your serious transgressions.

[Silence. Lights rise. Both DEE and TAYLOR sit staring at the audience.]

DEE *[downbeat]*: 'member when David Bowie died?

[TAYLOR remains silent.]

DEE: True legend. *[Pause]* And leader. Never forget Gail Ann Dorsey's words about him.

[TAYLOR silently, tucking his chin into his chest, a puzzled look of confusion on his face.]

DEE: Bowie's bass player. Amazing what she said about Bowie.

[TAYLOR raises his eyebrows, appearing slightly more engaged.]

DEE *[sensing TAYLOR's interest, reaching for her handbag]*: Kept a copy in my bag. Have to read it though to do it justice ...



[A

David Bowie and Gail Ann Dorsey - Under Pressure

background female voice begins reading as DEE carefully unfolds the newspaper clipping as if it was a precious piece of papyrus:

In my case, it was not a matter of being “introduced” to David Bowie, but somehow, by the fickle and unfathomable laws of the universe, I happen to be one of the extremely fortunate musicians in an endless sea of amazing musicians to be “chosen” by him. It was the spring of 1995 and I was in Bath, writing and recording music for a solo album project [...] A telephone call came completely out of the blue one afternoon. I naturally assumed it was one of my London mates playing a practical joke on me! [...] [but] it was indeed Mr Bowie himself asking if I would be interested in playing bass in a band he was putting together for a tour.

In the 20 years following that life-changing phone call, some of the mystery of how he stumbled upon me became a bit clearer.

[DEE takes over the reading – slowly, clearly, inspiringly ...]

Bowie was an astute observer. He was a man who was constantly seeking the new, the now, and had a voracious appetite for devouring the sweet seeds of the future. As a human being as well as an artist, he was able to see the potential for creative expression in virtually everything and everyone around him; perhaps the God-given aptitude that set him apart from the rest. Through his work, it feels like he knows us, even better than we know ourselves [...] [Working with] an artist of his calibre and stature could have been a disappointing, nightmarish charade of ego and hierarchy, but there was always an atmosphere of professionalism, respect, endless humour, and love.

[The video begins playing on the large screen ...

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DWtSyorjXv4>.

David Bowie is in the background shadows handing over the spotlight to Gail Ann Dorsey, a female African American bass player, who sings the challenging lead vocals famously sung by Queen front-man Freddie Mercury in the original version of the song, Under Pressure.

At 1 minute 30 seconds (1:30mins) into the song, on a high-wire tightrope spanning across the theatre above audience members in the stalls, various cast members can be seen walking tentatively along the tightrope until disappearing from view on the other side of the theatre.

The high-wire walkers reappear on a tightrope behind a shadowed screen on the stage, their shadowy images not completely masking their identity e.g. the pregnant ELLIE; MORRIS, in trademark overalls stumbles, his jockey's cap dropping from the high wire; FATIMA in her hijab, head bowed; TAYLOR and DEE; VICTOR; HOPE; OSCAR; GINO; WILL; SANDRA in golfing plus-fours and TAMIKA in choir robes; WALLY in his tailored yellow suit and all other cast members. Intermittent lyrics scroll across the screen: "the terror of knowing what this world is about" and "give love one more chance" highlighted in bold, accompanied by quotes that DEE has been reading ... devouring the sweets seeds of the future ... creative potential in everyone ... [NOT] a disappointing, nightmarish charade of ego and hierarchy ... [but] an atmosphere of professionalism, respect, endless humour, and love.

As the song Under Pressure draws to a close, one cast member, unidentifiable behind the shadowed screen on stage, suddenly drops from the high wire ... swaying as they hang, while the final piano note sounds. Lights suddenly switch off, leaving the stage in darkness.]

INTERMISSION.



IV FLOTSAM and JETSAM

Flotsam derives from the French word *floter*, to float.

noun:

1. the part of the wreckage of a ship and its cargo found floating on the water.
2. material or refuse floating on water.
3. useless or unimportant items; odds and ends.
4. a vagrant, penniless population: the flotsam of the city slums in medieval Europe.

Jetsam is a shortened word for jettison.

noun:

goods cast overboard deliberately, as to lighten a vessel or improve its stability in an emergency, which sink where jettisoned or are washed ashore. (Stevenson & Waite, 2011).

The Undertow

There is a long tradition of art, literature and performance that reinforces and reifies, as well as challenges transcending existing social relations, including leaders and modes of leadership. The intention of this PhD is not to critique such works but to acknowledge examples across various creative genres. These include Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) which was explicitly a novel about the evolution of capitalism in which Defoe gave literary voice to emerging social relations with Crusoe a prototypical capitalist 'leader' (Hymer, 2011); Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* (1851) featuring the deranged Captain Ahab hired as the manager of a floating capitalist factory (James 2001/1953; Joseph, 2009); L. Frank Baum's *The Wizard of Oz* (1900), a children's story but also a tale about social relations. The protagonists of these stories represent 'leaders' of different sections of British and American society. Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* (1906) is a novel about work and working conditions in a Chicago meat packing works which scandalised American society and led to the first OH&S legislation (Hodges, 2018). George Orwell was very much focussed on language and story-telling as ways of understanding leadership (authoritarianism in particular) in a range of texts including *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937), *Animal Farm* (1945) and *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949). In filmmaking, the Gordon Gecko character in the movie *Wall Street* (1987) exemplifies the belief that 'Greed is Good'; in *American Psycho* (2000), a rich person can literally get away with murder. Mike Lewis movies such as *Liar's Poker* (2010), *The Big Short* (2016), *Moneyball* (2011) and Michael Davis' *City of Quartz* (1990) highlighted that American marketing was not just selling product, but social relations, including naturalising social relations at work involving leadership. In the movie *Vice* (2018) a particular point of view was represented about US vice-

president Dick Cheney and his callous pivotal role in the Bush administration's leadership in the GWOT. In the documentary film *Theatre of War* (2009) the theme of German playwright Bertoldt Brecht's masterpiece *Mother Courage and Her Children* is explored through actor and director discussion around the question: 'Why does history repeat itself in an endless cycle of violence and warfare?'. Brecht's work sought to intervene in shaping society. His achievements in epic theatre introduced aesthetic innovations for prioritising the audience's perspective (Brecht, 1964) and *placed an emphasis on being part of a whole* which is not understandable if one part of it is examined by itself (Hecht, 1961). Other plays such Václav Havel's *The Memorandum* (1980/1965) which parodies bureaucracy and Anton Chekov's *The Cherry Orchard* (1998/1904) in which an argument between a debt-plagued landowner and serf-turned millionaire over the future of the orchard express challenges to new modes of business leadership and social relations. In Franz Kafka's works, bureaucratic legal authority is often construed to be an incomprehensible, usually hidden force that controls the lives of innocent victims. Kafka's diary highlights his conflict with the absurd universe he describes:

Enclosed in my own four walls, I found myself as an immigrant imprisoned in a foreign country; ... I saw my family as strange aliens whose foreign customs, rites, and very language defied comprehension; ... though I did not want it, they forced me to participate in their bizarre rituals; ... I could not resist (Preece, 2002, p. 15–31).

I will return to Kafka in Chapter 7 specifically in relation to his novella *Metamorphosis* (Kafka, 2002). On Australian television screens organizational life is regularly portrayed in shows such as *The Office*, *The IT Crowd* and *Utopia*, where creative devices such as black comedy, satire, irony and farce are employed to represent an organizational reality to which audiences immediately relate. While all of these creative works aimed to represent a perspective of our world that would potentially change how people understand and operate in it, the film and television works, in particular, also had a commercial imperative to make them profitable through engaging entertainment for their audiences. It would be easy to expect that producing such profitable entertainment could be stressful, challenging work. However, for actor-comedian Kitty Flanagan, who plays the bossy condescending, scheming public relations manager in Australian television series *Utopia*, when asked how she gets her head into character, she described the consummate ease of her artistic transformation into character: 'she needed look no further than her own "inner arsehole"' (McManus, 2019).

In their representation of social relations, including organizational life, the creative works above have a goal in mind to attract the attention of a passive audience to provide either an entertaining escape from their 'real' lives, persuade them to a particular point-of-view, expose the large-scale mischievous behaviours of ruthless people, reveal hidden injustices, generate hilarious sources of amusement, communicate a political ideology or simply provide comforting entertainment in a very familiar workplace setting. While needing to work within a comprehensible framework, this PhD adds to these creative works through an attempt to 'show not tell', to resist or reduce representation and to allow active space for the reader or audience to engage with the work in their own sensemaking way. In relation to the research question and organizational leadership, the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.* aims to relate to the affective, processual, emergent, embodied lived experiences of leadership. Like the research through practice (Hope, 2016) process itself, of working *outside* of the creative artefact to communicate it and *inside* the artefact to create it, the allowing in of multiple sensibilities is at ease with divergence, postpones judgement, tolerates not knowing and, thus, cultivates broader access to the whole human experience. This differentiates from the more conventional use of theatre in relation to organizational leadership which has been a critique of, and force of resistance to, the so-called leadership being experienced.

In the academy, the question of leadership is often framed and re-framed in the constant formal and informal challenges to existing social relations. Heather Höpfl was one management scholar who came to see the arresting force of 'unreflexive contentedness' of the working class around her which fostered an uncritical acceptance of a fixed social order (Höpfl et al., 2017, p. 86). In highlighting how mere *performance* using only part of oneself is required in the servicing of an organisational role Höpfl employs French philosopher Denis Diderot's actor-whore comparison to emphasise her 'partial soul selling' point (Höpfl, 2002). In keeping with their contention that managers had 'sold their souls' to the devil during an organizational merger, organization scholars Jackie Ford and Nancy Harding presented their findings in the form of a play based on Christopher Marlowe's devilish Dr Faustus, and issued a provocative challenge to 'organizational researchers who find nothing but the sweetness and light of contentment amongst the employees who form the data for their studies' (Ford and Harding, 2003, p. 1148).

Respondents to such a challenge might rely on Bauman: 'Whether we play the game or not, it is being played with us. Whatever we do or abstain from doing, our withdrawal will change

nothing' (Bauman, 2009, p. 262). Nevertheless, examples where writing in organizational studies has attempted to break-free from the constraints of scientific academic rules continue to emerge.

Writing in the context of management learning, Professor of Organization Studies and Deputy Dean at UTS Business School, Carl Rhodes, provides a useful summary:

Barbara Czarniawska (1999) surmised that organization studies was a literary genre open to hybridization where those rules could be deliberately broken, and in the 1980s and 1990s lots of people started breaking those rules. John Jermier (1985) wrote short stories to dynamically illustrate the politics of work, Michael Rosen (1985, 1988) wrote ethnography with the style and flair of a novelist, Tony Watson (2000) wrote stories about real managers through fiction, Monika Kostera (1997) gave us poems about organization studies, Gibson Burrell (1997) entered the pandemonium of a two-way text and plays were scripted about ethics (Starkey, 1999), employment (Ford and Harding, 2003) and scholarship (Steyaert and Hjorth, 2002). Chris Grey and Amanda Sinclair (2006) attested to 'writing differently', a hope that our writing could be a 'powerful and evocative performance, able to change peoples' experiences of the world [...] Collectively, it was shown that the shackles of conservative modes of writing organization studies could be removed, and the new freedoms this created could creatively, critically and productively say things that were hitherto unsayable' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 4).

In the field of organizational aesthetics, US scholar Steven Taylor's play *Ties That Bind* (2002) places the spotlight on the academy itself, highlighting the machinations and traditions that underpin its organizational operation. Like Ford and Harding (2003), Taylor's representational findings are not 'all sweetness and light'. Political scientist Timothy Pachirat's *Among Wolves* (2017) presents a seven act play to focus on the relationship between ethnography as a research method and the operation of power. And political power is an organisational driver, as evidenced by the following example in Australia.

From the turn of the new millennium, the increase in the number of asylum seeker boat arrivals on suspect illegal/irregular entry vessels (SIEVs) into Australia rose rapidly. More than 15,000 vessels arrived in 2011 alone, placing significant pressure on Australian Government policy settings and resources, primarily the Customs Marine Unit and Defence Forces (Phillips & Spinks, 2013).

Since the advent of the asylum seeker crisis, a series of theatrical works have been created most of which place a critical focus on government policy. In particular, there has been a response to *Operation Sovereign Borders* (OSB) (2013), which is described by the Australian Government Department of Home Affairs thus:

The Australian Government is committed to protecting Australia's borders, combating people smuggling in our region, and preventing people from risking their lives at sea. Operation Sovereign Borders is a military-led border security operation that was established in 2013 to deliver on this commitment. There is only one way to gain entry into Australia — with an Australian visa (Australian Government, 2019).

One example of a theatrical work that preceded the OSB period related to what became known as 'The Children Overboard' affair. A political storm emerged in Australia when, on the cusp of a federal election, a Howard Government senior minister publicly announced to a ravenous media that asylum seekers on leaky boats had thrown their children overboard as a ploy to be rescued and settled in Australia. As the storm raged, Customs marine unit officers at sea were reporting to colleagues via email that asylum seeker children were not being thrown into the sea. Customs managers around the country were called into urgent meetings to forbid all communication on the matter. The Government's strict border protection policies worked in its favour because the public supported the perception created of a 'strong' Government versus a 'weak' opposition; duly, the Howard Government was re-elected with an increased majority. Was this simply a textbook case of masterful management?

A subsequent Australian Senate Select Committee formed an inquiry into the matter titled 'A Certain Maritime Incident', which found that the government was aware prior to the election that no children had been at risk of being thrown overboard. Despite criticism of the Government for exploiting the fears of a voting public that a tidal wave of illegal immigrants was destined for Australian shores, stories of the demonising and strict control over asylum seekers continue to this day. Chapter 5 below, contains a cautionary tale about the powerful force of affect in *The Red Ship on the Horizon* (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010).

The title of Senate Select Committee enquiry became the title of the play *CMI (A Certain Maritime Incident)* (Version 1.0, 2004). This play was written and performed by: Danielle Antaki, Stephen Klinder, Nikki Heywood, Deborah Pollard, Christopher Ryan, David Williams from the Sydney company named Version 1.0. at Performance Space, Sydney on 26 March–11 April 2004 (Garde, 2013).

The play's creators, primarily through dramaturg Paul Dwyer, based their performance on the 2200-page official transcript of the inquiry. In this deconstruction of powerful, privileged politicians at work and the boring daily grind of committee hearings, the minute-by-minute struggle for survival by desperate seafaring illegal immigrants is laid bare in juxtaposition.



Figure 11 Images of CMI – A Certain Maritime Incident

In CMI, the palpable representation of non-rescued asylum seekers, their anonymous naked bodies strategically laid out, complete with mortuary toe-tags – their personal ‘protection’ symbolically stripped away – emphasises the power to persuade an audience into a particular way of thinking. A range of other plays from the world of Customs and Border Protection have emerged that chronicle the plight of asylum seekers via testimonial or verbatim theatre (Cox, 2013), which seek to guide the audience to view the asylum seeker issue through a particular representational lens. Titles such as *Journey of Asylum – Waiting* (Catherine Simmonds), *The Pacific Solution* (Ben Eltham), *Nothing But Nothing* (Towfiq Al-Qady), *Halal-el-Mashakel* (Linda Jaivin), *The Rainbow Dark* (Victoria Carless) stage the sad, desperate plight of asylum seekers through a range of creative techniques such as autobiography, fictional vignettes, satire, farce and irony (Cox et. al., 2013).

I am inspired by these works to create the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.* in which some similar techniques to other plays have been employed. Specifically, the use of humour, farce, metaphor and dark irony, through the public service penchant for using acronyms, the Key Result Area Performance Awards, or K.R.A.P. Awards, is a case in point. However, unlike plays chronicling the plight of asylum seekers via testimonial or verbatim theatre (Cox, 2013) that seek to guide the audience to view the asylum seeker issue through a particular

representational lens, *Work. Life. Balance.* aims to adopt a less political position and explore the less obvious, unexceptional happenings of ordinary affects in organizational life (Stewart, 2007; Gherardi, 2017a).

One aim of this method is to ‘slow the quick jump to representational thinking and evaluative critique long enough to find ways of approaching the complex and uncertain objects that fascinate because they literally hit us or exert a pull on us’ (Stewart, 2007, p.7). In its textual form of a playscript, a fuller, more balanced and complete understanding of organizational life might be possible through the focus of our attention on affect, aesthetics and atmosphere attunement and a creative writing process that might shed light on varying perspectives on the complexity and non-linearity of leadership. As well as being woven into dialogue, this occurs via stage and actor directions given in parentheses, and in dramaturgical notes regarding proposed images appearing on large screens above the stage that highlight a character’s nervousness, bewilderment, joy, passion, sadness, shock, dismay, love, anger, etc. These strategies acknowledge quite explicitly the presence in organizational life of the body; a body that knows through the senses and a body whose capacity to be affected, and to affect, is central to ‘a relational epistemology in which becoming is privileged with respect to being’ (Gherardi, 2017b, p. 355); that is, the ongoing processual responses to affects (internal relation, or what we make of what happens to us, post-affect).



Reflections
Reflections

From Management ... To Leadership! [2]

This is a time for reflection about your leadership.

A time to ask yourself, in 2011:

- How is my leadership developing?
- What is going well with my leadership?
- In what ways can my leadership improve?
- How can you take your people with you?



With all this consultant development talk about 'my leadership' of 'my people' it would appear that, like Mark Twain, reports of the 'heroic leader's' death are greatly exaggerated. At least there must be consensus among scholars to clarify the phenomenon of leadership:

- ❖ 'Business leadership is evolving in the directions of artistry and spirituality' (Hatch et al., 2006, vii).
- ❖ '...the leadership/priest metaphor is an attempt to frame the concept of leadership' (Ruth, 2014, p. 175).
- ❖ 'Leaders of business organizations are not spiritual engineers or secular priests, charged with responsibility for the human soul' (Tourish & Tourish, 2010, p. 218).
- ❖ '...no discussion of leadership metaphors would be complete without an appropriate set of follower metaphors' (Fairhurst, 2011, p. 189).
- ❖ 'Leadership authenticity adds another page to the myth of the heroic leader' (Wetzel, 2015, p. 41).
- ❖ 'Students typically begin our courses holding taken-for-granted assumptions, particularly about the value of heroic leaders (... "charisma"); the positive nature of follower conformity (... "loyalty"); and the problematic or negative nature of follower dissent and resistance (... "trouble-making")' (Collinson & Tourish, 2015, p.581).
- ❖ 'The courageous follower' (Chaleff, 2009).
- ❖ 'We argue that an important component of any critical leadership course is a reconceptualization of the importance of followers' agency, knowledgeability, and proactivity' (Collinson & Tourish, 2015, p. 588).
- ❖ 'Complex adaptive systems approaches focus on how leaders affect and are affected by the informal networks in which they take part, and how they use

networks to advance innovation through conflict and dialogue within boundaries' (Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018, p. 95).

- ❖ '...no matter how many leadership theories emerge there is still no consensus as to the set of knowledge and skills which a leader requires ... Petriglieri and Petriglieri (2015) call for humanisation of leadership to stimulate behaviours which are more sympathetic to the context of leaders and managers, turbulent or otherwise, reducing reliance on current business school textbook approaches to leadership' (Fleming, Millar & Culpin, 2018, p. 607).

Consensus? Synchronised swimming? Or, still being churned in the undertow of a rip?



Adopting a more traditional lens than theatre scripts and dramatic representations, but directed at ethical leadership development, organizational scholar Ann Cunliffe argues for critical reflexivity, combined with moral activity and a relational epistemology, to understand and address pressures associated with ethical behaviour in organizations:

This way of thinking is important, recent corporate scandals have raised questions about the nature of ethical action and the pressures that leaders and managers face when trying to act in morally responsible ways. Critical-reflexivity offers a way of surfacing these pressures (2009, p. 98).

And so how does this organizational scholarly perspective intersect with, if not come to be usurped by, creative writing?

In 2018, Carl Rhodes observed that, since the 1980's, boundaries have been pushed by a small minority of scholars in order to emphasise the contention of Barbara Czarniawska in 1999 that 'organization studies is a literary genre open to hybridization' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 4). In this PhD, I agree with a growing number of scholars who argue that the most obvious and accurate, cause for the lack of acknowledgement of organization studies as a literary genre is the overly scientific and narrow, dehumanising, technical language that is the mainstream driver of discourse and publication in the field (Rhodes, 2018; Taylor, 2018; Badley, 2014; Gosling &

Case, 2013; Miller et al. 2011; Ladkin and Taylor, 2010; Springborg, 2010). Rhodes aptly describes the frustrating ponderous institutional demands placed on organization scholars who have long been: 'haunted by the spectre of scientific discourse shoehorned into dry genres and bullied by audit regimes that try to wring out the passion and romance of thought' (Rhodes, 2015, p. 290). Leadership scholars Richard Bolden and Jonathan Gosling argue that a more discursive approach that helps to reveal and challenge underlying organizational assumptions is likely to be more beneficial if organizations are looking to move beyond individualistic notions of leadership towards more inclusive and collective forms (Bolden & Gosling, 2006, p. 147). According to Rhodes (2018), the sense of a 'new reactionary conservatism' in organization studies, results in a world which Alan Miller and colleagues describe as a 'publish or perish' culture that restricts creativity, innovation and relevance in organizational research (Miller et al., 2011). Consequently, it also heavily impacts organizational leadership and management *practice*.

Furthermore, scholars in the literary arts also have a major role to play in reshaping boundaries to allow us to more freely *jump between rockpools at low tide*. For example, creative writing scholars such as Craig Batty and Noel Maloney are demonstrating the significant role that can be played through their adept multidisciplinary supervision of this PhD, together with Carl, and previously with Martin Wood. In my experience during the Executive Master of Arts, the general tendency of Arts-based students was to be critical of 'management' and 'business'. Comments were routinely made by fellow EMA students such as: '*Accounting and economics and financial spreadsheets? I'd rather poke my eyes out with a stick*'. But if a passionate person wants to lead an arts program, run an arts festival or sit on an arts board, wouldn't it be a good idea for them to know how to read financial statements?

In terms of writing about organizations, business-related organization studies might not be the only field that struggles to formally recognise that 'organization studies is a literary genre open to hybridization' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 4). The 'peak body' for creative and professional writing in Australia and New Zealand, the Australasian Association of Writing Programs (AAWP), promotes its role and details the range of 'Topics/Genres' it accepts for peer review in its *TEXT* journal as follows:

Writers and academics interested in the teaching of creative and professional writing in the university, TAFE and community sectors, as well as anyone studying for an Honours or Higher Degree in writing. Colleagues from New Zealand, Hong Kong,

Singapore and the United Kingdom are members too. The AAWP promotes discussion of all aspects of practice, pedagogy and research in this exciting and expanding field in Australasia. It also aims to raise the profile of creative and professional writing as research and the role of writers in the community ...

(Topics/Genres):

- History (state particular interests if relevant)
- Politics (as above)
- Identity
- Culture
- Technology
- Gender (e.g. queer writing, feminist writing, etc.)
- Postcolonialism
- Indigenous Knowledges
- The environment (e.g. ecocriticism, ecopoetry, etc.)
- Travel writing
- Romance genre
- Fantasy genre
- Science Fiction
- Other genres (please state)
- Other interests (please state)

(Australian Association of Writing Programs, 2020)

The 'Organization genre' appears to be an 'Other'. This is merely a minor point. The AAWP provides a wonderful service and would likely respond by arguing that 'organization studies' are covered within every one of the genres listed above. Some people might suggest that genres such as 'Fantasy' and 'Science fiction' are top of the list. Those innocent victims

featured in the organizational stories in the introduction of this PhD might agree, especially in the absence of the 'Horror' genre at AAWP.

The point is, 'organizations' play a significant role in a large part of most of our lives. The university, TAFE and community sectors being well-served by AAWP are all *organizations*. The very establishment of AAWP was through a group collective, where like-minded people came together to *organise* themselves. I argue that this is the point where the organizational scholarly perspective intersects with, if not comes to be usurped by, creative writing.

It is difficult to think of an employed person who has been in a workplace or business meeting or work lunchroom and never felt the sense that something else is going on in workplace exchanges between people; something hidden, below the surface, beyond the spoken words, behind the façade. As Sempert et al. observe in relation to research-led practice in the specific form of the lyric essay: 'A surprise, a flinch, a lifted brow; a nonsensical yet affectively vital effect. *What occurs as a result of the movement between forces is more important than resolving the tension, or arriving at fixed knowledge*' (2017, p.208) (my emphasis). This is what the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript attempts to evoke through a close connection with relational leadership theory, which considers how relationships look, feel and appeal to one's conscious and unconscious aesthetic sensibilities as evidenced by a growing number of scholars (Gherardi, 2017a; Munro & Thanem, 2018; Czarniawska, 2018; Fotaki, Kenny & Vachhani, 2017; Pullen & Rhodes, 2015; Ashcraft, 2017; Uhl-Bien, 2006; Taylor & Hansen, 2005; Ropo, Sauer & Salovaara, 2013; Rhodes, 2018; Wood, 2018; Taylor, 2018).

The creation of *Work. Life. Balance.* was a process of testing and reflecting, allowing space for ideas to germinate, delaying the impulse to force decisions about character and plot development, leaving paths open and allowing the work to incubate until it was ready to reveal itself. Examples of this are detailed in Chapter 7 of this PhD. In a similar vein, Taylor and Hansen identify the tension between instrumental/intellectual work and artistic/aesthetic work, and claim:

Aesthetic forms of expression are like experiments that allow us to reconsider and challenge dominant categories and classifications ... [they] not only transform organisations, but the lenses we use to view them (Taylor & Hansen, 2005).

Cunliffe asserts that she is 'advocating a relational, reflexive and situated approach in which self is always in-relation to, and ethically-responsible for, others' (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 95).

Following her belief that 'The basic practical-moral problem in life is not what to do, but what kind of person to be' (Shotter & Cunliffe, 2002, p. 20), Cunliffe employs the Philosopher Leader as a metaphor for 'examining the interrelatedness of the emergent relational, ethical and reflexive nature of this approach' (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 95). In so doing, she pulls together the three threads of relationality, moral activity and reflexivity, which can be discussed separately, but are 'inevitably and irrevocably entwined' as follows:

(1) ethical and moral actions are (2) embedded in relational understanding and (3) enacted through self- and critical-reflexivity. (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 94)

Potential exists here to extend Cunliffe's metaphor by entwining the thread of critical reflexivity with the thread of creative practice (refer Figure 12). How might that help?

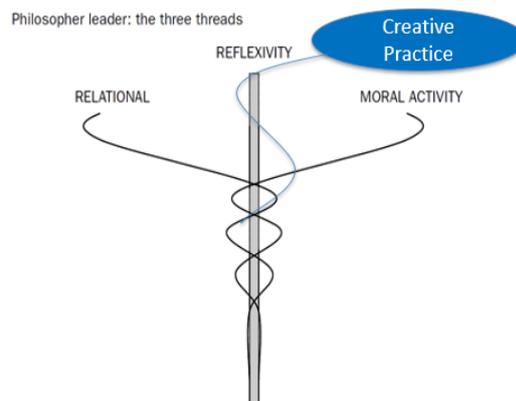


Figure 12 Creative practice – the 4th Thread? (based on Cunliffe, 2009, p. 94)

Firstly, creative practice can help us with critical reflexivity beyond the largely science-based perspective of more conventional leadership theory and practice. In terms of a theatrical play, it can provide us with an embodied, lived experience of 'leadership' by actively walking in the time of the event as distinct from passively pondering matters 'over there'. It is the force of the dramatic moment that creates the new knowledge, that can suddenly bring connections that have been dormant in our previous knowledge into active use in making sense of the experience, both through our corporeal and critically reflective selves. Secondly, it allows us to speak the unspeakable. 'Writing in non-conventional forms [...] is about what can and cannot be said politically' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 5). Thirdly, it operates in an aesthetic regime (Rancière, 2004) of emergence that encourages democratic freedom rather than authoritarian constraint,

collapsing borders such as science-art-philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994), science-art-craft (Mintzberg, 2005), manager-artist-priest (Hatch et al., 2006) and science-art-literature (Rhodes, 2018, p. 7). In the aesthetic regime, 'testimony and fiction come under the same regime of meaning' (Rancière, 2004, p. 37). Fourthly, the destabilising effect of artistic-aesthetic methods (Taylor & Hansen, 2005) enables 'orders of domination' to be liberated (Rancière, 2009, p. 32). As organization scholars Marianna Fotaki, Beverly Metcalfe and Nancy Harding argue in their work with Luce Irigaray, a creative practitioner in *writing from the body*, such creative practice allows us to 'subvert the inherited social order as it is presently defined by patriarchal structures (Fotaki et al., 2014, p. 1251).

Finally, considerable progress has been achieved in organizational leadership theory over recent decades, and the clear belief exists that the field has moved far beyond the 'heroic' leader model of leadership throughout various iterations of transactional, transformational, adaptive, servant and, indeed, Cunliffe's 'The Philosopher Leader'. Scholars advocating distributed leadership (Jones, 2017; Chatwani, 2018), regard leadership to be occurring when *any* organizational member designs *any* core business activities 'to influence the motivation, knowledge, affect, or practices of other organizational members' (Spillane, 2006, pp. 11-12). A distributed leadership perspective views leadership as a socially situated process at the intersection between leaders, followers and the situation. Despite the progress achieved, and as evidenced in the Reflections 'quotes' earlier in this PhD chapter, the mainstream tendency in organizational leadership continues to this day to frame leadership through the concrete terms of 'leaders' and 'followers'. The contention of this PhD is that the performative (Butler, 2010), experimental, 'not knowing' creative practice research method allows us to view leadership through an artistic-aesthetic lens that opens us to newly balanced possibilities in the field. Like the 'feminine creation' of Brigitte Biehl-Missal in organizational studies, which challenges and deconstructs stereotypical masculine rationality, methodological rigour and knowledge certainty, the use of creative practice is not about writing directly against the dominant patriarchal discourse but is about harmoniously 'illustrating its limits through the aesthetic form' (Biehl-Missal, 2013, p. 181).

In this way, I contend that through characters and plotlines, the examination of this organizational phenomenon can be broadened. I am questioning fundamental assumptions about leadership, such as degrees of balance between brazen self-interest, vulnerability, service, fear, care for others and forces upon us, based on the premise that authentic

leadership does not reside solely on one side of the dominant social science leader-follower dichotomy, nor is limited to distinct and self-contained individuals; rather, it is more relational in nature and experienced through our bodies – bodies that have the capacity to affect and be affected – in an intra-connected dynamic collective assemblage, more associated with an ongoing processual state of becoming than a singular state of being.

If critical reflexivity means ‘examining and unsettling our assumptions, actions and their impacts’ (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 94), then my way of creating such subtle, unsettling disturbances is through the use of creative writing as a ‘minor gesture’ (Manning, 2016; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994) used in the deterritorialization of ideas/concepts/nature. Through the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, which involves ‘a way of working that emerges from the incubation of and reflection on a project/practice’ (Sempert et al., 2017, p. 206), the possibility emerges for a response to the question posed by Lather and St Pierre:

how do we think a “research problem” in the imbrication of an agentic assemblage of diverse elements that are constantly intra-acting, never stable, never the same?
(Lather & St Pierre, 2013, p. 630).

By creating ‘layers of complexity that mirror [the] subject matter’ (Williams, 2013), the richness of the playscript in this PhD intends to surface emotion, which can be impactful to what we make of our experience (i.e., internal relation). According to Stroud, creative approaches to research such as this hold the power ‘to move individuals to thought, reflection, action, and belief [...] [and to] enable ideas to be shown and felt, not merely told’ (2008, p. 19).

Similarly, in her study on the turn to affect and the turn to practice, organization scholar Silvia Gherardi focuses on atmosphere attunement to ‘ordinary affects’, often disregarded as irrelevant by the orthodoxy who ‘position the researcher as a disembodied and external observer of life’ (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 218). ‘Ordinary affects’ are significant not in their everyday meanings and representations but in the intensities they build, the ‘continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences’ produced through ‘the varied, surging capacities to affect and be affected’ (Stewart, 2007, p. 4), and the thoughts and feelings they make possible (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 211).

In the Reflections in Chapter 3, the embodied, lived experience of both Elizabeth and The Salesman were experiences with which I could empathise, not simply in a cognitive, rational

sense but in an embodied affective connection, through an organizational experience many years earlier, that still lives-on in my body today. I expect it also does for them.



Reflections

Reflections

‘I hope someone in your family has died.’

I wasn’t expecting these to be the first words I would hear from my boss, until I tentatively entered the frosty aura of her office early one morning in 2004. It is true, I had been a coward. Maybe I deserved to be confronted with the ugliness of these words. Shortly after her arrival at work, I had visited her office to explain my absence on the previous day from a staff leadership program on which she had been a senior management mentor over the preceding three days. The program, which was conducted in country Victoria, a two-hour drive from Melbourne, was facilitated by the in-house staff counsellor, employee assistance provider (EAP) Carly. As the Manager HRD, I was required by my boss to attend the final one hour of the program to listen to the open forum, after which I would finalise my report reviewing the merits and ongoing viability of the state-wide leadership program. My authorship of the review report was critical for my boss, in terms of its credibility.

Several years earlier, as a manager at Melbourne Airport (MAP), I had initiated, designed and facilitated the leadership program for one large operational business unit at MAP, in two-day residential sessions at an off-site facility. EAP Carly supported the program and assisted with co-facilitation of some sessions. Due to its success, the program was adopted by corporate operations and expanded for developing leaders across all business units in the entire state, with EAP Carly maintaining a facilitation role, while I returned to my ‘day job’. My intimate knowledge of the program made my review input important, hence my unexpected secondment to the Manager HRD role several years later. However, the tense conflict between my boss and EAP Carly over many months had me petrified. It had become clear to me that the

report I was to write had a pre-determined 'management' outcome. Two of our young children were sick, so I decided to join my wife at their doctor's appointment, remaining home to care for them, rather than suffer the four-hour return drive to attend a one-hour open forum, in a war zone.

In hindsight, my cowardice was less about a long return drive to the country and more about a desire to avoid major conflict. EAP Carly had raised the ire of my boss, the Director of Corporate Operations, due to Carly's monthly EAP reports to the Regional Executive consistently detailing staff reports of bullying by specific managers, some of whom were close friends of my boss. I had been inadvertently informed by a senior management colleague that secret plans were being developed by my boss to replace EAP Carly through an open tender process designed in a manner that would eliminate her from being competitive in the field for the new contract. EAP Carly's secondary role as a state-wide leadership program facilitator meant that losing the EAP contract might not see her removed entirely from the organization. In short, my boss attended the three-day leadership program to commence its demise and she required me to write a review report that recommended the leadership program be ceased and replaced by a new redesigned program with a new facilitator, i.e. replacing Carly.

'I hope someone in your family has died.'

As I entered the immaculately tidy office on that fateful morning, it was not simply the actual words of my boss that wounded me. As a corporate director, my boss was fully aware, as were all of my colleagues, that merely a few years prior to her comment, my seven-year-old son had been hit by a car whilst walking home from school with his mother and three younger sisters. He suffered major injuries to his leg, narrowly avoided having his left foot amputated and was hospitalised for months. Indeed, our family was extremely grateful for the showering of gifts, 'get well' cards and words of support from a wide number of work colleagues.

It may be true that the intention of my boss in choosing her words was not a deliberate attempt to maim me. But, maim me she did. Upon my arrival, the entire demeanour of my boss was one of raging aggression. Her face reddened, her eyes glared fury, her tense neck muscles had veins bulging, her thin, taut lips spewed white droplets as she spat those words in my direction.

'I hope someone in your family has died.'

In fairness to my boss, her actual words might simply have been to convey:

‘You’d better have a good excuse for not attending the open forum.’

But she had been informed on the previous day about the ‘caring for sick children’ reason for my absence. Words and intent aside, it was the venomous tone, aggressive body language and uncontrolled fury in which the words were conveyed, in the context of my son’s recent road trauma, that had such a shocking, belittling, dehumanising effect. I tentatively offered a brief apology, left her office, headed directly for the elevator and down into the bustling city street feeling physically ill, shaken and shattered that a colleague – a fellow human being – could be so cruel. And for what?

Essentially, my absence had been judged as an act of disloyalty. In some ways it was, but not in terms of being ‘loyal’ to one side of a dispute against another. Like my boss, EAP Carly was a formidable character and also not one to take a backward step. Carly had been exposed through a range of experiences to the ruthless, self-serving, bullying culture amongst some influential members of the management ‘team’. Such a self-serving culture was well-known across the organization. In previous discussions where I had raised concerns about the management team culture, Carly had reminded me of the mortgage to pay, the children to educate, clothe and feed, advising:

‘Don’t fall on your sword.’



Pulsing

Organization scholars Marianna Fotaki, Kate Kenny and Sheena Vachhani, contend that affect permeates organizations intensely, influencing the motivation, political manoeuvring and decision-making of people including in relationships between leaders and followers (Fotaki et al., 2017). The study of affect aims to evoke states of being, as distinct from analysing their later discursive representation as emotions. Scholars emphasise the potential transformative properties of affects, for example *shame*, by demonstrating the creative reworking of it in order to evoke pride (Sedgwick, 2003). Affect enables us to appreciate and communicate the qualitative richness of life, in its embodied, lived form (Ibid.). Furthermore, researchers,

themselves, are open to becoming affected by encounters, as distinct from simply reporting them (McCormack, 2008).

In the case of Elizabeth in *The Wedding Planner* ('Reflections' in Chapter 3), I remain affected by her evocative rendering of her encounter with the more powerful Maggie. According to Fotaki et al. (2017) the richness of life that affect enables us to appreciate 'demands innovative and experimental approaches to how we study organizations' (Fotaki et al., 2017) and how we engage with 'the pulsing refrains of affect' that illuminate the organizational scenes we study' (Ibid.). This is where creative writing adds value to organizational fields, including leadership, as an innovative and experimental approach with the potential for evoking 'the pulsing refrains of affect'. Appropriating the work of colleagues in the field, Alison Pullen, Carl Rhodes and Torkild Thanem, Fotaki et al. argue that the relational ontology of affective politics 'move beyond the persistent binarism between culturally constructed emotions and the body's materiality while focusing on the radical potential of mundane experiences in everyday organizational life' (Fotaki et al., 2017, p. 12).

Smooth sailing

Affective behaviour in organizations usually sits within a moral code, a set of statements that help organizational members to determine right from wrong. These are traditionally represented by ethics and values statements, codes of conduct and other such policies that abound in most organizations. Not only are organizations 'doing' ethics but they proudly proclaim their high-order ethical standards to convince governments, stakeholders and the public about how good they are (Fleming et al., 2013) then employ a range of measurement tools, metrics and audits to demonstrate their effective management of ethics (Pullen and Rhodes, 2015).

Robert Jackall (2010) observed that the ability to determine right from wrong might be a relatively straightforward matter, according to a former vice-president of a large USA firm:

What is right in the corporation is not what is right in a man's home or in his church. What is right in the corporation is what the guy above you wants from you. That's what morality is in the corporation (Jackall, 2010, p. 4).

In the 'Reflections' in Chapter 3, had The Salesman not employed a similar moral code to Jackall's vice-president, perhaps he might have enjoyed a more authentic, respectful engagement with staff at the State Treasury Department.

Government organisations have been overrun by salesmen – public relations 'spin doctors' who attempt to convey the message that business is operating smoothly and all is under control. One current global pandemic-related case-in-point involves the reluctant resignation of the Victorian Government health minister following a government judicial enquiry into tragic hotel quarantine breaches that has resulted in hundreds of deaths and economic ruin for some businesses and families. Lawyer and Melbourne media commentator Jon Faine describes government policy presented as an 'impressive array of flowcharts, submissions, summaries and briefings' as 'lipstick on a pig' claiming: 'In this era of collapsing ministerial responsibility governments specialise in "appearance" versus "reality". What looks on paper to be a perfect system can be total rubbish. It is only in a fantasy world that a policy is magically delivered as written' (Faine, 2020). Commenting on the same health crisis issue, an impassioned opinion piece by journalist Chloe Booker reported that serious staff concerns about infection control breaches were ignored and denied by government leaders who failed to act yet found time to 'remind staff that they weren't allowed to speak to the media'.

Booker states:

Maybe if more effort was spent listening to staff on the ground instead of trying to save face, millions of Melburnians wouldn't still be stuck in our homes and hundreds of people wouldn't have died. Take responsibility. Own it. Drop the spin. It's infuriating (Booker, 2020).

An erosion of trust is the typical outcome in situations where an absence of sincerity in human relations is clearly evident. This seems to be especially true when that lack emanates from government, business, religious and community *leaders*, including leaders in sport. Reporting on 'failed' US sports champions in golf, gridiron and cycling, Craig Silver cites an example from theatre and film acting classes and introduces a new term to the debate:

Acting students were once told that the most important thing in show business was sincerity, and if they could fake that, they could go anywhere. But it's time to get over the idea that there's a separate media-based reality superior to the real one; that

there is a second kind of sincerity – “spincerity” – that works much better than honesty. And that one’s image, no matter how fake, is all that matters (Silver, 2013).

Alison Pullen and Carl Rhodes (2015) argue that ‘when organizations seek to define the interests of others in their own terms so they can be controlled for the benefit of the corporation itself, then an ethics of genuine concern and respect for other people lies in tatters’ (Pullen & Rhodes, 2015, p. 160). Ethics is reduced to a masculine form ‘dominated by desires for control, rationality and order’ (Ibid., p. 161), an ethics that is disconnected from the body (Shildrick, 1997), developed by and for the man of reason who privileges mind over body’ (Lloyd, 1993). According to Pullen and Rhodes, ‘the man of reason’ continues to retain his privileged place in the structured, ordered and relatively permanent organizations in which we live our lives’ (2015, p. 161). Despite claims to the contrary by leadership and management researchers and practitioners, the leader-as-hero lives on.

Floating

This has led me, in the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, to seek representations that evoke ‘the man of reason’ and these can be seen in the careful construction of characters such as KG, Wally, Gino, Will and the succession of National Directors Operations rotating through the Revolving Door in Canberra, who act with an air of entitlement as if the organizations exists, not for the taxpayer-funded community service the organization must deliver, but purely for the benefit of their status and next bonus or promotion. In keeping with experiences detailed in earlier ‘Reflections’ in this PhD, I have also taken care to represent ‘the woman of reason’ in the form of management characters such as Jools, Rhonda and Penny who represent the ‘status games [that] are a barrier to opening your heart’ (Taylor, 2014, p. 243). When Penny is ultimately betrayed by Jools, she suffers the indignity of having to experience organizational life, no longer through the eyes of a privileged manager but through the eyes of the ‘managed’ (Bauman, 2009, p. 197). However, it is perhaps an inanimate object in the form of a piece of artwork that best represents ‘the man of reason’ in *Work. Life. Balance.* A copy of Hans Holbein’s painting *The Ambassadors* (1533) (see Figure 13), was purchased by KG, referred to in an opening scene then reflected upon by Hope and Oscar in Act 3 Scene 5. It is through action associated with *The Ambassadors*, including breaking the fourth wall, that the heroic leadership inference in ‘the man of reason’ receives its greatest challenge.

seem frozen in their pose. Their pale, deadpan faces are devoid of emotion, lips closed tight, eyes gazing blankly, directly out of the scene. The only egress is forward and down (Carroll, 2004). Holbein's painting is famous for containing, in the bottom foreground, a 'floating' anamorphic image. An anamorphic lens perspective distorts the image, squeezing it horizontally while leaving the vertical aspect unaffected. When viewed from directly in front of the painting, the 'floating' anamorphic image is indistinguishable; however, when viewed from an oblique point of view, is revealed to be a human skull. I interpret Holbein's veiled poignant message and represent it in the playscript as follows:

A perception of fixed, socially constructed human power is subordinate to the multiple intersecting planes of free-floating, processual forces of nature. Our mortality is inescapable. In Act 4 Scene 5 of *Work. Life. Balance.*, a boat named in honour of a song by UK musician David Bowie, titled 'Sorrow', heads-out on patrol to The Lakes with characters Gino, Will, Victor and Oscar on board. When the boat crashes at sea, Holbein's message has been carefully represented by two words: 'Sorrow floats'.

In *Work. Life. Balance.*, 'The Ambassadors' as masters of their world might relate not only to management characters such as Wally, KG, Gino, Penny, Rhonda and Will, but also to subordinates in the 'in' crowd such as part-time employees Sandra and Tamika.

My intention was to suggest that, regardless of class, culture or rank on an organization chart, none of us – neither leader nor follower, president nor cleaner – is immune from the risk of losing sight of the Holbein message. In the current VUCA world that organizations inhabit, toxic as it can sometimes be, as stories and 'Reflections' in my thesis give testament, this message is as salient as ever. Were we to narrow down the perspective of organization scholars Jerzy Kociatkiewicz and Monica Kostera to an organizational context, the blame for such toxicity rests at the feet of the most financially powerful:

The richest few [*management*] are supposed to be the driving force of economic, political and social progress [*organizational progress*], their constant enrichment providing hope of a decent life for us all. And yet this logic has proven itself to be insurmountably flawed, not just false but counter-effective – as the rich get richer, the colossal majority of humanity [*employees*] sees its condition stagnate or deteriorate, with no hope on the horizon for any positive changes (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2014, p. 46).

As they survey the world through their Baumanian window (Ibid., p. 37), Kociatkiewicz and Kostera argue for sociological compassion, following Zygmunt Bauman's belief in 'a responsibility to the Other that precedes all other kinds of responsibility and social action' (Ibid., p. 47). Derived from 'the face of the Other' in the ethics of Emmanuel Lévinas, it aims to *awaken the human being* through 'the human moral impulse' which Bauman argues 'precedes reason and action' (Ibid.). In other words, the moral impulse is an embodied affective experience that precedes consciousness and to which the awakening human being should pay *attention*. In Chapter 5, an opposing view will be considered in which Levinas' embodied ethics of recognition is described as 'an ethics of impossibility' (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 236) but for now, I will remain with the wondrous view from the Baumanian window.

The view in Bauman 'ethics' (2009) led me in the creation of Act 3 Scene 3 of *Work. Life. Balance.*, in which Victor quietly views the Holbein painting from various angles before a theatrical moment of 'magic' occurs. A hologram of the 'floating' anamorphic image in Holbein's painting comes to life, rising out of the canvas to reveal to Victor – and to the audience over whom the hologram floats – the latent message of the artist. Sorrow floats for all of us, so don't get ahead of yourselves! If mortal vulnerability is a shared human condition, then the skull not only represents the face of an ambassador or the face of a reader/audience member over whom the hologram floats, it also represents the face of the Other, whether it be the bullied Elizabeth or Maggie the Departmental Head or The Salesman or 'his (bullying) people'. This Other must include not only the colossal majority of humanity [*employees*], but also the richest few [*management*].

If this is truth, why not be kinder to each other in our organizational lives, to allow in more care and compassion? This is a challenge presented in the lyrics of the song, titled *Under Pressure*, by UK musicians Queen and David Bowie that plays at the end of Act 3 prior to intermission in *Work. Life. Balance.* as the cast of characters traverse the tightrope of organizational life:

Why can't we give love, one more chance? (Mercury et al., 1981).



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 4 Scene 1

[Spotlight rises on two stools at centre stage. One stool is empty. On the other sits TAYLOR, hair dishevelled, messy, unbuttoned FIBS uniform shirt, his sad, reddened eyes staring silently into the audience. Playing on a large screen behind them, to the right, are images of a rolling sea; waves crashing into the base of rocky, impenetrable escarpments; hand-carved timber canoes; tall ships at full sail; sports cruisers; leaky wooden boats; winged keels; heavily laden container ships; 'high-rise' container stacks on wharves; a single red tanker floating on the horizon between sea and sky; stormy, threatening seas.]

A black metal stand in the darkened front right of stage cradles an electric guitar behind a microphone stand.]

[Without speaking, TAYLOR slowly rises from the stool, his footsteps echoing around the silent stage as he walks to the guitar stand and pauses. TAYLOR picks up the guitar, gently placing the strap over his shoulder, then begins quietly playing a flowing melodic interlude in the song Deep Water before firmly striking the chords in the song's middle stanza, the electric guitar emitting a loud, bone-rattling, attention grabbing attack of the senses riff. TAYLOR then begins to sing, after not having spoken one word in previous scenes.]

<https://youtu.be/2lQb7rnuqu4?t=180>

[Note – the link is provided as an example of the 'live' effect. The section of the song, Deep Water, that TAYLOR plays starts at 3:00mins in the video link, begins with a melodic interlude then leads into TAYLOR's striking guitar riff that is louder and more angry than in this video.]

The message in the lyrics relates to the words that scroll across the screen: 'Deep water ... I'm caught up in its flow. If I'm in ov-er my head, I'd be the last to know ...' (Music fades at 4:30 minutes).

TAYLOR belts out the middle stanza lyrics:

Sitting out on the Palm Beach Road,
I'm so drunk and the car won't go,
And my crazy eyes keep looking out to sea,
The Sunday drivers are cruising round,
I wish they'd all go back to town,
What do they expect to find,
Sure as hell ain't peace of mind.
Deep water

I'm caught up in its flow.

If I'm in over my head

I'd be the last to know –

Deep Water ...]

(Songwriter: Richard Clapton Deep Water lyrics © Words & Music A Div Of Big Deal Music LLC)

ACT 4 Scene 2 Revolving Doors

[Stage left, the action is in Canberra. Maintenance men – one of whom, through ‘theatrical artistic licence’, appears to be the ever-present VICTOR in overalls – are working to repair ‘broken’ revolving doors at the entrance to FIBS HQ in Canberra. PENNY is wheeling her small carry-on luggage on one side of broken doors trying to speak with Julie-Anne ‘JOOLS’ Leech who is not seen and responds only by text message]

PENNY *[shouting into her phone]*: Why won't you answer your phone Jools?!

[A series of text messages are exchanged.]

[Texting.]

JOOLS: Can't come outside Penny. Revolving doors are broken 😞

[Texting.]

PENNY: Wonder how they got broken, Jools...?

[Texting.]

JOOLS: Go catch your flight. FYI, Total FIBS staff = more in Canberra than in regions. So Canberra corporate positions ID'd to be cut will now NOT be cut. R U clear now?

😊

[Silence.]

[Texting.]

PENNY: Been trying to discuss but U R avoiding me!

[Silence.]

[Texting.]

PENNY: Regional staff cuts are done.

[Silence.]

[Texting.]

PENNY: Around the entire country.

[Silence.]

[Texting.]

PENNY: Where 'border' protection actually happens.

[Silence.]

[Texting. The following text message breaks through the fourth wall and gets sent as a GROUP text to all audience members whose mobile phone numbers were recorded at registration.]

PENNY: There are NO SHIPS IN CANBERRA, Jools!

[Silence.]

[Texting.]

PENNY: This is all about your direct reports! If you lose too many Canberra staff, YOUR executive jobs might go!

[Texting.]

JOOLS: Out of our hands. CEO said all CBR positions must be saved. Nothing more we can do.

[Lights fade at stage left as PENNY wheels her carry-on luggage across the stage towards stage right where she will arrive back at her home office. She sees KG in animated discussion with the hunched-over, pleading figure of FATIMA outside the entrance to Caffeine Addictions so makes a bee-line towards him.]

FATIMA *[desperately]*: But can I have my job back, Ken? Please? You must help me!

KG: All the evidence points to you.

FATIMA: I swear it wasn't me! It had to be Will who sourced that lady's information. It can only have been Will.

KG: There is nothing I can do Fat...

[Disregarding FATIMA, PENNY bursts-in to interrupt the conversation, her cabin luggage making a loud bang as she slams it onto the stage. The spotlight slowly follows FATIMA, her head bowed as she forlornly shuffles off-stage, leaving the voices of PENNY and KG to be heard as the lights fade.]

PENNY *[angrily]*: ... so all the regions have completed our staff cuts – in good faith – then Canberra decide they can't afford to cut any positions. It's outrageous!

KG *[backing away, hands gesturing tone it down]*: Shhh. It'll work itself out, Penny. There must be good reason ...

[With lights dimmed, one solitary spotlight remains on PENNY. An airhorn boom salute announces the presence of THE SYSTEM. The backdrop changes to a full bank of computer screens, images and data indiscriminately rotate across the screens. KG stands aside, looking lost. MORRIS makes a brief appearance, swivelling around, scanning the stage as if searching for the identity of THE SYSTEM.]

THE SYSTEM: The National Director has received urgent submissions containing statistical facts highlighting significant negative impact should Canberra corporate positions not be retained.

PENNY *[searching for the location of the voice]*: Negative impact on what?

THE SYSTEM: National security.

PENNY: National security? HOW?

THE SYSTEM: Need-to-know principles apply.

PENNY: Meaning?

THE SYSTEM: Classified 'Top Secret'. Your security clearance level is too low to be given access to such information.

PENNY *[confused]*: How am I supposed to lead the project when ...

THE SYSTEM: The National Director's team of consultants has reviewed the submissions and agrees that the statistics undeniably support said retention of those Canberra positions.

PENNY *[incredulous]*: They got access?

THE SYSTEM: The CEO has signed-off on the consultant's recommendation. His decision is final.

[Lights rise.]

PENNY *[shouting in exasperation while picking-up her luggage]*: It's a done deal Ken. FULL STOP. End of Story. The decision's been made!

KG *[grabbing PENNY by the elbow and steering her to the side of the entrance, patrons looking over at the kerfuffle]*: Calm your farm, Penny. I'll look into it for you.

PENNY *[crying out in frustration]*: It's just not good enough! They do it all the time.

ACT 4 Scene 3

[VICTOR sits at his desk on the sidelines of the stage, watching the action unfold. Spotlight rises on DEE's empty stool with TAYLOR seated on his stool at centre stage, staring silently into the audience. Straight narration follows.]

TAYLOR: Poor Penny. It's all been happening for her, I'm afraid. Gino, Rowan and Wally were selected ahead of her to attend a 'High Talent' program in Canberra. *[Theatrically.]* **'From Management ... to ... Leadership'**. Making matters worse, Oscar and Rhonda were also selected, after Gino pulled some strings in Canberra related to PIFAL development. Penny is furious about not being considered 'high talent'. KG and 'JOOLS' have told Penny that she is 'too valuable' so can't be released at such a critical time in the transformation project.

[VICTOR audibly shifts his chair back from the desk.]

TAYLOR: Meanwhile Gino and Will, after losing out to Penny in KG's biannual K.R.A.P. award, have made plans to address new 'risks to the border' by establishing an operation order for a small vessel patrol at The Lakes. To get there they have to go through The Heads into an ocean crossing. Waterside Control staff are questioning why the director and manager are getting so 'hands on' in operational matters and not allowing staff to run these operations. And Wally is furious after Gino poaches Oscar away from Goods Arrivals to join them on 'The Lakes' operation. Oscar has talked Gino into taking Victor with them on the mission, as Victor has little to do whilst sitting at his desk on the redeployment list. Gino is reluctant but Oscar insists.

[While TAYLOR is talking, OSCAR enters stage left and stops a short distance from VICTOR'S desk.]

OSCAR *[as if addressing GINO]*: It's a package deal, Gino. Ya want me, ya get Victor as well. No deal, and I go back to Wally.

[OSCAR steps forward, sits on the edge of VICTOR'S desk then gestures VICTOR to come with him. VICTOR shakes his head, OSCAR gently places his hands behind VICTOR's underarms and encouragingly helps him to stand. OSCAR pats VICTOR'S back as they exit stage left. Lights fade.]

ACT 4 Scene 4 Boat Patrol

[OSCAR, VICTOR, GINO and WILL depart on a three-day boat 'patrol', beyond the bay, through The Heads to the open seas and The Lakes beyond the point. The men are accompanied by 'patrol provisions' in the form of abundant supplies of food, beer, fishing bait and rods.]

WILL *[fumbling whilst carrying tool kits, fishing rods, FIBS testing equipment, supplies]*: Make yourself useful Victor. Grab a few of these cases of beer. And the eskies of ice. Check the bags of bait are in there.

VICTOR: Jesus Will, how many beers you taking? You'll sink the boat with this lot.

WILL *[stopping to pick-up items he had dropped]*: Not if we empty 'em! And they're crushable cans. Quicker we empty 'em, more space we'll have.

VICTOR *[heaving a slab onto his shoulder]*: Fair enough.

WILL *[tapping his head, mimicking GINO]*: Up here for dancin'.

[Lights fade briefly then rise again on board the sports cruiser with GINO behind the wheel wearing his 'Skippergino' captain's hat.]

GINO *[sipping on a beer, one hand on the wheel]*: This is the life, men! Beats workin'.

VICTOR: Nice hat.

GINO: Father's day gift. The kids love this boat.

VICTOR *[perturbed]*: You take your family out boating?

GINO *[shrugs, holding-up a ceramic 'Skippergino' mug.]* Coffee mug to match.

WILL *[keenly sculling his beer]*: Good time to get away. That workplace is more toxic by the day.

OSCAR: Penny certainly seems to be showing the strain. See her going off at Ken?

WILL *[smiling cheekily]*: She'll be fine. KG's on the case ... *[pause]* ... Canberra will be shakin' in their boots. Ha! *[opens another can then, addresses OSCAR]* You drinkin'?

OSCAR *[sheepishly]*: Nah.

WILL *[gesturing to GINO]*: He's gotta have a beer with us.

OSCAR *[more firmly]*: Off the booze. Tryin' to get back with Tessa and the kids.

WILL: She'll never know. *[Teasing.]* Here for a good time not a long time.

GINO: One won't hurt. Surely?

OSCAR: 'One' has hurt before. *[Changing tack.]* It's after 4. Think we should stay in the bay tonight and go through The Heads in the morning?

WILL: Really? Sooner we get to The Lakes the better, don't you think?

OSCAR: Got away later than planned. It'd be dark not long after we pass through The Heads.

WILL *[upbeat]*: Less traffic on the high seas ...?

[OSCAR and VICTOR look unconvinced. GINO is unmoved.]

WILL: C'mon! Breakfast on The Lakes.

GINO: I don't mind. How long did you say it would take us to get to The Lakes, Oscar?

OSCAR: After The Heads?

[GINO nods.]

OSCAR: 'bout 20 minutes to the point, depending on the swell.

WILL: See? Twenty minutes. That's nuthin'.

OSCAR *[ignoring WILL]*: ... then another 30 minutes or so to The Lakes entrance, proper.

GINO: I don't mind. Whatever you guys want to do.

VICTOR *[supporting OSCAR]*: Said you wanted to fish didn't you? Fish in the bay before it gets dark.

GINO: Preferences?

VICTOR: I don't fish.

GINO *[sipping on his can whilst steering]*: I know a good spot for flathead and whiting close to dusk. No anchor, just dangle and drift. Never fails.

OSCAR: Think it would be sensible Gino.

[GINO raises his can, thumb extended upwards. WILL frowns, crushing his empty can and reaching for another.]

[Lights begin to fade as the slowing sound of an engine coming to a halt fills the air.]

[Music can be heard from the cabin. The song playing is Sorrow, by David Bowie.]

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MRVgKaqrHSc>

ACT 4 Scene 5 Lake Sorrow

[The stage is in darkness. A spotlight rises on the cabin as the music fades. Dinner plates, littered with fish bones, sit on the table alongside a pile of empty beer cans which appear to be helping the conversation to flow.]

WILL: ... but your mob are useless Victor. Won't win another game this season!

VICTOR: They're not 'my mob'. We only follow them 'cos the kids' mates at school barracked for them.

OSCAR: How long since the Penguins have actually won a flag?

GINO *[disdainfully]*: 30 years.

WILL: ... and counting ... What is it about migrants all following the Penguins? Even Fatima in Intel had a Penguins scarf on her desk.

OSCAR *[curiously]*: Hey, what happened with that IT audit and Fatima?

GINO: Rite of passage. Have to follow the Penguins to get in. Only way they can attract members.

VICTOR: And I guess you guys follow The Raiders?

GINO: Naturally.

WILL: Most successful team in the comp.

GINO: And best managed. Everyone tries to copy their system. Raiders are always one step ahead.

WILL: Twenty-seven flags, ten more than the next best. Stats don't lie.

VICTOR: Salary cap cheats is what I've heard.

WILL *[laughing]*: Whatever it takes!

GINO: Fake news. The Raiders conquer. People get jealous.

OSCAR *[changing tack]*: So, the IT audit? Fatima?

GINO *[shrugs]*: Guilty, as charged.

VICTOR *[animated]*: No way. Fatima stalking? Has to be a set-up.

OSCAR: Stalking?

GINO: Audit findings were pretty clear. All the evidence points to Fatima.

VICTOR *[shaking his head]*: She's as gentle as a bird, Gino. Honest as the day is long.

OSCAR: Hang on, what happened?

VICTOR: And very religious. Must have been someone else in Intel on her computer.

WILL *[growing agitated]*: Religion's got nuthin' to do with it! *[In a sarcastic, 'holier than thou' voice]* "Oh, she's a devout Muslim, never do anything wrong." Total baloney. Being a Muslim is no different from barracking for the fucking Penguins – it's just the team you barrack for, the team you got indoctrinated into as a kid. That's all religion is.

VICTOR: Seriously?

WILL: She's middle eastern Victor. Never trust 'em. If the stalking info wasn't for her it would've been for her husband or her brother or some other bloke.

OSCAR: What was the info?

GINO *[taking another swig from his can]*: Never mind.

[OSCAR gives up and starts checking the boat log-book.]

WILL *[moving towards the cabin doorway]*: They are a horny lot. Breed like monkeys. That's why the women have to cover up – take away the temptation. Have a look at em! There's 10+ in every family. They'll take over the world if we're not careful ... *[Looking around at the calm seas, holding his arms out to the balmy air.]* Beautiful night.

VICTOR: That's funny. I thought we had policies in place about racism, diversity, respect ... you know ... KG's codes of conduct?

WILL *[turning his head slightly from outside towards VICTOR]*: Come off it Victor! They are taking over the world! Look at Europe, UK, the US ... swarming with bloody Muslims.

GINO: Donald'll fix it. Make America Great Again.

WILL *[laughing]*: Build a wall!

OSCAR: That's Mexicans.

WILL *[taking another swig]*: Same.

VICTOR *[annoyed]*: We're not stuck with them – because *we* won't let them in! *[Pause.]* Let them rot on Manus and PNG. No better than Trump's wall ... our Government policy.

WILL *[dismissively, finishing another can]*: 'nuff of the violin strings buddy ... They don't deserve it.

VICTOR: 'They' are human beings.

[Silence.]

VICTOR: So, you guys agree with off-shore detention?

GINO *[unemotionally]*: Gotta enforce border protection.

WILL: It's called 'management' Victor. We decide who comes in and who doesn't, not some greedy, people smuggling pirate. *[Stops. Smiles at his own dawning cleverness.]* Hey, I like that. It's anti-piracy policy.

VICTOR: So, you guys fully support Operation Borders Downunder then?

GINO and WILL *[in unison]*: Course we do.

[GINO turns to OSCAR, who has squeezed past WILL onto the rear deck.]

GINO: You're quiet Oscar... *[Pause.]* ... You've been out there on the frontline. Have to agree wouldn't ya?

OSCAR *[quietly turning to face into the cabin]*: It's complex Gino.

GINO: Surely, you're not saying you disagree with our policy? It was your bread and butter for 15 years. Paid your mortgage, food on the table for your kids ...

WILL: Yeah, and food will be in short supply if we allow the buggers to overrun us.

OSCAR: Come off it Will. *[Turning to GINO.]* All I'm saying is that these poor people are fleeing life-threatening conflict. How else are they s'posed to protect their families?

WILL: They threw their babies overboard Oscar ... So much for protecting their families!

OSCAR: Absolute rubbish! And you know it, Will. Political expediency. Total media beat-up to serve the government of the day. I was there! These are desperate people. Why else would you risk your life – and your life savings – trying to get here?

WILL *[taking another swig of his beer]*: To serve Allah?

OSCAR *[ignoring WILL]*: Their broken-down old boats were sinking. Our own lives were at risk trying to save them. And then we got the message from above in Canberra that we were sworn

to secrecy, banned from talking to media. Silencing the truth in order to get the friggin' politics right.

GINO: That's exactly the point, Oscar! There were 15,000 sinking boats on the water, chock-full of illegal immigrants. What's the government supposed to do? Sit on their hands and watch them die?

WILL: ... or let 'em make it ashore and overrun our country?

GINO [*emphatically*]: It's a totally defensible position our government has taken. Bipartisan support. Statistics don't lie.

OSCAR: I know, I know, but imagine spending years in detention, Gino? Without committing any crime, fleeing with your family from a seriously life-and-death crisis?

GINO: Nooo, Oscar ...

OSCAR: ... trapped on a small remote island reliant on handsomely rewarded host countries and outsourced private security companies making a fortune out of the Australian taxpayer?

GINO [*laughing*]: Sorry, Oscar. You are wrong. The government's management of this has been magnificent. [*Taking another swig from his can.*] Not caving-in on policy just because a handful of 'do-gooders' want to manipulate the media to kick up a fuss. Awesome!

OSCAR: Are you serious?

GINO: Not only have we [*finger quotation marks*] 'stopped the boats' but when complaints about treatment of asylum seekers emerge from bleeding heart lefties and their big-noting lawyers, the government has cleverly been able to deflect the complaints to the outsourced providers. The government's not 'directly' responsible for ill-treatment of refugees, it's the contractors.

WILL [*grinning, holding up his can*]: Masterful management!

VICTOR: Masterful management is not leadership, Will.

OSCAR [*reflectively*]: World seems to have changed so much since I first went onto the boats. Like emerging from a cave.

VICTOR: How?

OSCAR: More selfish, I think. People in FIBS seem to treat our work as nothing more than a vehicle to advance their own careers.

VICTOR [*staring provocatively at GINO*]: Starts with management.

GINO [*skolling his can*]: Surprise, surprise ...

OSCAR: But it's true. Everyone's looking for an angle that serves *them*.

VICTOR [*agreeing with the thread*]: Rather than serving others.

OSCAR [*reflective, no malice*]: What happened to service over self-interest. Balance is all wrong.

VICTOR: Couldn't agree more. Public service or self-service?

GINO: Who doesn't serve themselves? We're all selfish. Goes back to Adam Smith. The Invisible Hand ...

WILL *[swaying]*: Who?

GINO: Father of economics.

WILL *[slurring]*: Who's the mother?

GINO: Theresa.

VICTOR *[choking on his beer, spraying pellets across the stage then wiping his mouth on his sleeve]*: Always goes back to economics with you, doesn't it Gino? Almighty dollar rules.

GINO: Has to if ya wanna survive. Kidd'n yourselves if ya can't see that.

VICTOR: There's survival and then there's greed.

GINO *[proudly]*: My parents arrived here from Italy after the war with only the clothes on their back. Had to work like Trojans to get ahead, provide for my sisters and I.

VICTOR: Like refugees on Manus?

GINO *[glaring at VICTOR]*: My parents are Catholics ... not terrorists.

VICTOR *[returning the glare]*: Catholic Church's never done anything terrorising ...

WILL *[missing the thread, blindly defending GINO]*: What about that Card'nal Pell?

OSCAR *[dismayed, returning to an earlier comment]*: To say, Gino, that government handballing responsibility to outsourced labour is 'clever'? Come ooo-on ... *[Pause.]* ... Try sneaky. Deceitfully negligent. Inhumane ... *[Pause.]* ... Look ... I get how sensitive the politics are. You're damned if you do and damned if you don't. But, surely ... SURELY ... we can be better than this.

GINO *[sarcastically]*: I thought you would be better than this Oscar.

OSCAR: Meaning?

GINO: Strategic management. It's OK that staff are too lazy or unsophisticated to understand the bigger picture but ...

WILL *[slurring]*: And the mindless masses. Unsophisticated as fuck.

VICTOR *[ignoring WILL]*: And I s'pose you'll say that Dee died because she was unsophisticated?

GINO: Dee's death was a tragedy. But if bein' unable to see the big picture is unsophisticated, then she probably was.

OSCAR *[with rising sarcasm]*: Guess it goes without saying, Gino, that, one's own sophistication is a given, I mean, in order to be able to judge someone else as 'unsophisticated'.

VICTOR *[eagerly]*: Yes, big assumption Gino. How could you possibly know you're qualified?

GINO *[unmoved]*: Statistics don't lie, gentlemen. The government has saved thousands of lives as a result of Borders Downunder policy. History will record it as a human rights success story, not the media beat-up that we're seeing in the press every day.

[GINO grabs another can and rips it open, as if the matter is closed.]

VICTOR: Isn't that just classic? Hiding behind the science. Just like the Americans in the Vietnam War.

GINO *[sounding bored, staring out to sea, his back to VICTOR and OSCAR]*: How so?

VICTOR: They just kept bombing ... *[pause]* ... Bombing. Bombing. Bombing. The more the Viet Cong undermined their mission the more they bombed. Why? Because they could. They never stopped to weigh the cost. The human cost. And the environmental cost. Number of bombs versus the amount of absolute terror in the eyes of human victims on the ground. Number of forests denuded to weed out the enemy versus the environmental impact on complex life forms. Ecosystems are fragile y'know.

OSCAR: Global War on Terror, the same.

[The large screen displays frightening images of the Vietnam War and GWOT.]

GINO *[impatiently]*: What are you saying Victor? I mean ... so what if the Yanks got it wrong in Vietnam.

VICTOR: What am I saying? ... *[Pause.]* ... You want to talk about statistics, Gino, your government – your own government, on behalf of its people – took in 40,000 of us Vietnamese refugees. If Prime Minister Fraser had not opened his heart to our plight, had not shown empathy towards us ... oh, God ... if the PM had not brought a balanced sense of common humanity to our terrorising human crisis, we wouldn't be here today.

GINO: Seemed to work out for your parents, didn't it? Still livin' in Vietnam. War didn't kill them. Hey Will, why'd Victor object so much to his job bein' cut?

WILL *[playfully, slurring]*: Kept braggin' about sendin' his pay back home to ...

VICTOR: You ARSEHOLES!

[GINO laughs, playfully reeling in an imaginary fishing line as VICTOR takes the bait. VICTOR continues.]

VICTOR *[returning fire]*: Let's get this straight ... You agree with the off-shore detention policy SO much ... that you don't mind, at all, having to sacrifice your own budget to pay for it then?

[GINO gives a quizzical look.]

VICTOR: I mean ... you had to cut back on staffing because of it, didn't you? According to Rhonda Radari. That's supposedly why I'm stuck on the redeployment list isn't it, Gino ...? ISN'T IT?

GINO: Listen you little ...

VICTOR: Amazing that you could afford this boat.

GINO *[turning to OSCAR]*: Told you we shouldn't have brought this little prick with us.

OSCAR *[raising his hands defensively]*: Take it easy Gino. He's got a right to feel aggrieved.

GINO: Bullshit he does! He's being a little smart arse! He and is autistic mate.

OSCAR: That's totally unfair Gino.

GINO: Why? Morris is on the spectrum. Just statin' a fact.

OSCAR: We're all on the spectrum! It's just a label.

VICTOR *[defiantly]*: Offend me all you like Gino. I know what ya been doin'. The game's nearly up ...

[Before he can remonstrate further with VICTOR, the boat engines roar to life. Unbeknown to his fellow 'crew', WILL has moved behind the wheel. WILL hits full throttle and the boat careers towards The Heads, at full speed.]

OSCAR *[anxiously rushing towards the pilot's chair]*: What are you doing Will?! You idiot! You'll get us all killed!

WILL *[beaming, screaming above the roar of the engines]*: Breakfast at The Lakes!

[The cruiser is rattling and shaking out of control on the stage, like a flight simulator in an airline pilot plane crash training drill.]

OSCAR *[grabbing at the steering wheel, as WILL shepherds the throttle]*: Pull back the fucking throttle!

WILL *[slurring excitedly]*: We're nearly there!

OSCAR: PULL IT BACK!

[GINO and VICTOR rush into the cabin.]

GINO: Back off Oscar!

OSCAR: He's gunna kill us! He's pissed as a newt!

GINO: Just BACK OFF! You'll both fucking kill us if you're wrestling the wheel. Take it easy. EVERYONE! *[Speaking calmly, but urgently to the drunken pilot.]* We can keep going Will. We can keep going. It's alright ... just pull it back mate.

[WILL pulls back on the throttle and the vessel returns to a safer state of equilibrium.]

WILL *[smiling, clumsily, in drunken stupor, turning to face his crewmen whilst pointing straight ahead]*: See, told you. There's The Heads just there ...

OSCAR *[calmer, but anxiously turning WILL's head back towards the bow]*: Watch where you're going!

GINO *[calmly]*: Why don't we let Oscar take the wheel, Will? He's the only one of us with ocean pilot experience.

[WILL turns again, looking forlornly at GINO, his hands now loosely attached to the steering wheel. OSCAR takes control of the wheel.]

GINO: That's it, mate. Good on you Will. Hand it over to Oscar now.

VICTOR: Want another beer, Will? Here ... *[holding out an opened can]* ... there's one just here.

[WILL removes his hands from the wheel and takes the freshly opened beer from VICTOR.]

OSCAR *[eyes fixed straight ahead, addressing GINO]*: What are we gunna do now? I've powered the lights so we've got some visibility ... but not much.

GINO: Keep going, I guess ... We're out here now, may as well keep going.

[The stage is almost in darkness. The vessel on it begins steadily rising and falling with the ocean swell, waves can be heard brushing firmly against the bow as a general sense of calm is restored. Gentle mists of spray are released over the audience, the low whir of the engines piercing the night air.]

GINO *[standing alongside OSCAR]*: How long did you say again? To The Lakes?

OSCAR *[eyes fixed straight ahead]*: Half hour. Tops.

GINO *[eyes fixed straight ahead]*: Any traffic?

OSCAR: Unlikely.

VICTOR *[returning to the bridge]*: I've got Will to lie down. Still clutching his beer but eyes closed.

OSCAR: Good, at least now ...

[The boat lurches suddenly as a huge crashing sound pounds the stage. All three men are thrown off-balance by the impact. VICTOR hits the deck.]

GINO *[anxiously grappling for something to hold onto]*: FUCK! What was that?

OSCAR *[shutting off the throttle, worriedly regaining his command of the wheel]*: Don't know ... *[pause]* ... we've hit something ... *[pause]* ... not sure what ...

GINO *[urgently]*: Damage?

OSCAR *[listening intently]*: Can't say yet ...

[The engines come to a sudden halt. Lights fade to a dim glow. The vessel is bobbing on the spot.]

GINO *[sounding more panicked]*: What's happening? ... *[Pause.]* ... Oscar? ... *[Pause.]* ... Don't just stand there like a fucking statue Oscar! DO SOMETHING!

[OSCAR moves toward the cabin door exit to check the damage.]

[GINO and VICTOR follow OSCAR outside of the cabin. WILL remains snoring on the lounge. OSCAR's voice can be heard as he leans over trying to examine the hull.]

OSCAR *[shouting]*: There's crap everywhere in the water. A large mass of junk ... *[Pause.]* ... Doesn't look like the hull's damaged. Hard to tell.

GINO *[shouting]*: What sort o' junk?

OSCAR *[his voice getting louder as he returns to the deck]*: Dunno ... timber ... bits of metal ... hard plastic ... *[Pause.]* ... I think we might have hit a mintzberg.

GINO: A what?

OSCAR *[pensive]*: A mintzberg ... sort of like an iceberg ... but it's made-up of piles of human junk and waste and rubbish, all congealed together by the rise and fall and flow of the ocean.

GINO *[bluntly, as he steps up onto the side of the boat, unzipping his trousers, preparing to pee]*: Never heard of it. *[Changing tack.]* How ya gunna get us to The Lakes?

[The sound of GINO's urinating into the ocean can be heard. WILL's snoring emerges again.]

OSCAR *[still pondering, thinking it through, failing to hear GINO's question]*: The power of the ocean force pounds this human waste into an impenetrable mass of solidified human crap, harder than any submarine mine that man can make. From what I know, a mintzberg should've sunk us, but we might be lucky.

GINO *[still peeing, glaring over his shoulder towards OSCAR]*: Couldn't care less how a bloody mintzberg is formed! My balls are on the line if this boat gets sunk! OUT HERE! Career over! CAN YOU GET US SAFELY TO THE LAKES?!

VICTOR: He's trying to tell you, you arrogant bastard!

GINO *[still peeing, turning his glare to intimidate VICTOR]*: Told you I've had enough of your smart-arse commentary.

VICTOR: AND I'VE HAD ENOUGH OF YOUR POWER ABUSING BULLYING.

[VICTOR motions as if rushing towards GINO, the feigned attack causing GINO to lose balance, his skipper's cap flying off his head as he stumbles backwards over the edge into the wild, night ocean.]

OSCAR *[shouting, lunging towards GINO to try to stop his watery exit, the Director's splash saturating OSCAR]*: JESUS VICTOR! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?!

[VICTOR grabs OSCAR, preventing him from rendering immediate assistance to GINO, whose panicked voice can be heard fading into the distance as the tide takes GINO away from the bobbing boat.]

GINO *[gasping]*: HEEEEELP!

VICTOR *[firmly]*: Give it a minute.

OSCAR *[urgently]*: He's drifting.

VICTOR *[unemotional]*: Do him good to learn how it feels to suffer.

GINO *[gasping desperately]*: HELP ME!

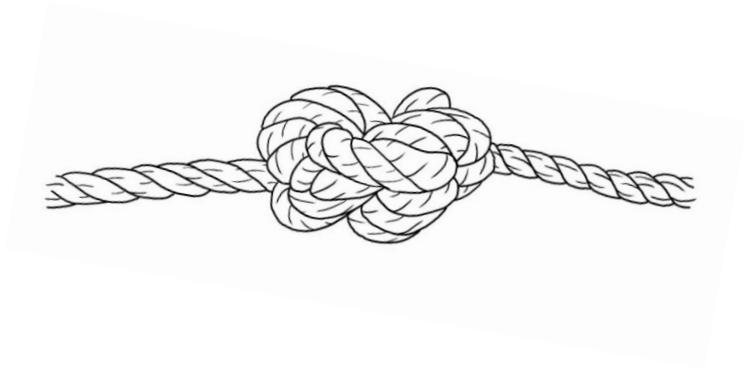
OSCAR: Tide's dragging him.

[VICTOR stands resolutely.]

GINO *[gasping]*: Please ... *[gasp]* ... I'm sor-ry ... *[gasp]* ... sorr ... Help ...

[The stage fades into total darkness as the immobilised vessel bobs helplessly in the ocean like an impotent cork. The strains of Bowie's Sorrow play gently in the background as the online advertised 'for sale' image of the sports cruiser is displayed on the large screen, the vessel's name on prominent display. Two words in bold red font, move slowly across the screen ... 'Sorrow floats'.]

[With lights out and the ominous rolling sound of a growing swell, a light mist or spray is released over the audience again as they are left in silence to consider what might happen next, what should happen next, what will happen next, what would happen next ... if they were in the ocean or in the boat ...]



V VIBRATIONS

In the artist of all kinds one can detect an inherent dilemma which belongs to the co-existence of two trends; the urgent need to communicate and the still more urgent need not to be found.

D.W. Winnicott (1963).

Circling the same buoys

Like a washed-out, discarded champagne cork bobbling in the shoreline shallows, a recurring question continues to resurface: Have organization studies in leadership and management progressed beyond the idea of the heroic leader? In their work on the ethics of affective leadership, organization scholars Iain Munro and Torkild Thanem (2018) argue that affective leadership should not be confused with 'passionate leadership' (Davies, 2008; Elliott & Stead, 2009). Building upon Thanem's earlier work (2013) they describe 'passionate leadership' as a current fashionable 'fad' which is founded on the assertion 'that leaders will be more successful at inspiring and motivating followers by being in touch with and leading through their own passions, typically ignoring that followers may not share the leader's passion, but instead be irritated, frustrated, and demotivated by them' (Munro & Thanem, 2018, p. 2). Echoes arise of *The Salesman* in earlier Reflections of this PhD. As Pullen and Rhodes (2008) describe the narcissistic malaise: 'It's all about me!' (2008, p. 5). According to Munro and Thanem, affective leadership differs from passionate leadership by taking 'a critical position towards the sad affects of passionate leadership and encourages us to pursue the good life through joyful affects and encounters that enhance our capacity to act and be acted upon' (Munro & Thanem, 2018, p. 2).

How does this relate to my central research question: How can creative practice research float the potential for new forms of leadership behaviour in organisations?

'Acting' is becoming an increasingly important focus for scholars in multiple fields. As leadership scholars Donna Ladkin and Chellie Spiller observe, organizational aesthetics (OA) scholar Steven S. Taylor draws on his training as an actor to highlight that being fully present in each moment elicits an authentically 'genuine' live, spontaneous unplanned response to events on the stage, despite knowing what they are going to say and do through prior rehearsals (Ladkin & Spiller, 2013, p. 8). However, off the stage, in his focus on the leader-follower dynamic, the actor/OA scholar Taylor argues that organizational 'status games' in real

workplaces stop us from being open to others and fully present in the moment (Taylor, 2008). So, according to Taylor, it seems that *on-stage* we have ‘genuine’ experiences but *off-stage* in real-life workplaces, status games stop us from ‘genuine’ experiences with each other. But if the former is merely ‘play’ and the latter is ‘real’, what is going on here?

Organization scholar Barbara Czarniawska also focuses on ‘acting’, largely through her research related to ‘an accidental organizational theorist’ Bruno Latour and his sociological Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Czarniawska, 2017; 2017a; 2014; Latour, 2012). According to Czarniawska, Latour’s ANT and German philosopher sociologist Niklas Luhmann (1927-1998) have usurped the influence of Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault in organization studies. Examining ‘macro actors’ in organizing, Czarniawska argues that the focus has shifted from a study of the phenomenon of power, itself, to a more nuanced question: ‘Who has power, and why is it those people and organizations and not the other?’ (Czarniawska, 2017b, p. 73). ANT is built upon two concepts: actant theory and translation. In *actant theory*, an actant is defined as a being or thing – be it people, animals, inanimate objects and concepts – ‘that accomplishes or undergoes an act’ (Ibid., p. 74). I argue in this PhD that there is a clear link to the affective leadership terminology described above regarding the ‘capacity to act and be acted upon’ (Munro & Thanem, 2018, p. 2).

The concept of *translation* is described by Czarniawska as ‘moving anything from one place to another changes not only what is moved, but also the mover – the translator’ (Czarniawska, 2017b, p. 74). Once again, we are reminded of Heraclitus (535BC) in Chapter 3 of this PhD, where you cannot step into the same river twice – both you, and it, form and dissolve, arrive and depart, ebb and flow. We are also reminded of the co-creating power of creative practice research. The link here is to the purple section in Hope’s Colour Wheel of Practice Research where the artist not only stands outside the practice artefact to communicate it but also stands within it in order to create it (Hope, 2016); the experimental creative-critical script development process, the mini-stages of relational exchanges, reflections, confessions etc. on which characters not only communicated with each other but also with their creator (Batty et al., 2016); and the potter’s relationship with clay where ‘if you work with it, it will teach you its strength, your limits, and the possibilities of co-creation’ (Parks, 2005, p. 211).

Despite the ongoing mainstream scholarly penchant for framing leadership in concrete terms of leaders and followers and situations, which we will address in later chapters, as Munro, Thanem and others are discovering, the power of affect on organizational relationships is

profound, especially in leadership. In this PhD, I argue that through paying attention to ordinary affects, including through a non-conventional creative 'scriptology' (Rhodes, 2018) such as the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, the performative act of making or doing can contribute to new ways of knowing (Batty, 2016).

Shimmers

Professor of sociology of work and organization, Silvia Gherardi, in her study of the turn to practice and the turn to affect within management studies, argues: 'The motivation for approaching practices ... was to define practice as 'a collective knowledgeable doing' aimed at rediscovering practice as a long-standing philosophical and sociological concept that reconnects it with knowing and learning (Gherardi, 2017b, pp. 346-347). This follows earlier attempts in a 'quiet revolution' to 'shift from an epistemology of possession' to one of a 'knowing' practice (Easterby-Smith et al., 2000), of which Gherardi (2009) is critical due to it favouring 'more orthodox accounts shaped by assumptions of rationalism and cognitivism' where practice and 'routine' are synonymous (Gherardi, 2017b). Appropriating Contu (2014) regarding the significant link between power and knowledge in terms of learning and knowing in practice, Gherardi argues that:

from the outset, the idea of practice was situated within a processual thinking and linked to the image of practice elements woven together ... many of these developments point towards a new regard for the issues of power, politics and trust (2017b, p. 347).

Gherardi (2017a; 2017b) highlights the commonalities and complementarities of the turn to affect and the turn to practice. She argues that they share a shift towards a 'becoming' epistemology where 'becoming is privileged with respect to being'; the 'body is the interface with the world, and it is what we learn to use to become sensitive to the world', and that sociomateriality is paramount in the post-humanist turn to practice because 'affect is embedded in the material world' (Ibid., p. 355). However, 'what mostly links the two turns is an interest in a search for a post-epistemology that decentres the human subject, linking the social and the natural, the mind and body and the cognitive and affective' (Ibid., p. 349). In the playscript, *Work. Life. Balance.* a number of inanimate objects are employed in the decentring of the human subject, for example the mirror, the revolving door, the superiority evoked in the

managerial clothing of Wally, the exclusive *Okie Dokie? Day* yellow t-shirts, the red right hand of Gino in the café, the use of Holbein’s artwork, *The Ambassadors* and the boat captain’s cap, ‘Skippergino’, which serves as a metaphor for leadership.

Like Probyn (2010), Gherardi (2017a) attributes a central place to the body in the ‘continuum of becoming’, in the capacity of the body to affect and to be affected (Gherardi, 2017a). Describing affect as ‘the name for what eludes form, cognition, and meaning’, she appropriates Massumi (1995) in emphasising the distinction between affect and emotion, denying they are synonymous. Affect pertains to biology (Nathanson, 1992) and is our physical response to feelings (Grossberg, 1992; Probyn, 2005). Affect escapes captivity in our body (Massumi, 2002). In contrast, emotion pertains to biography, it fixes ‘the quality of an experience’ by capturing affect, making emotion the biographical expression of that capture (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 210). Building upon this, in Figure 14, I articulate a further distinction by arguing that emotion pertains to sympathy, in terms of feeling pity for others, whereas affect more closely pertains to empathy whereby our physical response to feelings allows us to walk in the shoes of others, to feel their pain.

Emotion	Fixes the quality of an experience by capturing and representing affect	biography	sympathy
Affect	Our physical response to feelings that escapes confinement in the body	biology	empathy

Figure 14 Emotion and Affect

Relating the concept of affect to leadership ‘stories’ detailed earlier, one example might be to consider the respective human responses of the Commonwealth Bank Australia (CBA) financial planners in the celebrated scam by one of their colleagues, who whistle-blower Jeff Morris names as “Dodgy Don” (Morris, 2018). Why did Morris have the feeling: ‘Am I the only one who thinks this whole thing is just wrong?’ (Hooten, 2018) and why did his colleagues respond differently?

The financial planners present when Dodgy Don's deeds were gleefully announced might have felt *sympathy* for the plight of the 'little old lady', despite their excited admiration for Don succeeding in such a scam. In contrast, the affective response of whistle-blower Morris appears to be one of *empathy* for the unsuspecting elderly victim. It appears that Morris was able to 'walk in the shoes' of victims. To this day, ten years after first blowing the whistle and through years of battling CBA executives who ostracised and demeaned him, government banking regulator (ASIC) officials who blatantly failed him, prime ministers and a finance minister who dismissed him, the experience continues to 'live on his flesh' (see Pullen et al., 2017; Probyn, 2010). In April 2018, Jeff Morris wrote an article in the daily Fairfax media as the Royal Commission evidence was being heard. The passion and emotion in the language used by Morris is intense:

In my own case, way back in October 2008, I was one of the whistleblowers who gift wrapped and dropped into ASIC's lap a major fraud at CBA's Commonwealth Financial Planning, involving not just a rogue financial planner, "Dodgy" Don Nguyen but a management cover up to defraud the victims of compensation – which included sanitising the client files [...]

CBA lied to ASIC and ASIC believed them, taking no action until March of 2010 – 17 months later – and then only after the whistleblowers turned up at ASIC and pounded the table to demand action [...]

ASIC did nothing to protect me from the wrath of CBA but when I left the bank in February 2013 it was with the firm intention of blowing the whistle publicly, not just on CBA's corruption but on ASIC's complacent uselessness as well [...]

In June 2013, after a series of shocking revelations by Fairfax Media, Nationals Senator John 'Wacka' Williams moved for a Senate Inquiry into ASIC and CBA and secured a unanimous vote in support. When this inquiry reported 12 months later in June 2014 CBA's story had completely fallen apart. They eventually had to admit that they had 'inadvertently misled' ASIC about the compensation scheme under the Enforceable Undertaking whereby they had comprehensively deceived and ripped off the victims of what turned out to be a coterie of "rogue planners".

The inquiry concluded that ASIC was a "timid and hesitant" regulator who could not be relied upon to hold CBA to account. They concluded that a Royal Commission into the

CBA was warranted. Immediately the then Abbott government hosed down any prospect of a royal commission. I drove to Canberra to implore [Finance Minister] Mathias Cormann not to trust CBA.

I told him that ASIC had trusted CBA who had then made monkeys out of them. I warned him that the same thing would happen to him. It was in vain, of course, three weeks before CBA's annual general meeting, Cormann obligingly ruled out the royal commission [...]

The ticking time bomb for [Prime Minister] Scott Morrison's "tough cop on the beat" is the fees for no service scandal. Everybody in the industry knows that this was deliberate theft on the part of the big players. I blew the whistle on this in a submission to the Senate inquiry in May 2014. Yet ASIC has gone along with this incredible story that the major players accidentally stole hundreds of millions of dollars from their clients due to a series of unfortunate accidents. Why?

Perhaps because the truth is too painful: that ASIC the regulator was the only one who didn't know what was going on. AMP has broken ranks on this and admitted they acted deliberately. Others will follow. The big question then will be: did they really lie to ASIC or was it ASIC that wanted to be lied to? (Morris, 2018).

Following Gherardi, who appropriates philosopher Brian Massumi (2002), affect is rooted in Morris' biological physical response to feelings then expressed biographically as emotion. According to Gherardi, there is an implication in this sociolinguistic 'fixing' 'that something has always and again escaped' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 210). This processual capture and escape is why Massumi sees 'affect' as the label 'for what eludes form, cognition, and meaning' (Ibid.). However, in the internal relation of Jeff Morris, what he makes of his experience – in other words, how he *strives* – as distinct from simply what happens to him (external relation) is informed by an affective 'inventory of shimmers' that 'arises in the midst of *in-between-ness*: in the capacities to act and be acted upon' (Seigworth & Gregg, 2010, p. 1) (original emphasis). It is argued in this PhD that such shimmers can emerge through tiny fissures in the here-and-now moment of a theatre work and experienced through our bodies. Becoming attuned to them might lead to new ways of seeing, new forms of understanding, so it would be wise to pay attention. In the case of Morris' financial planner colleagues, were they not paying attention? These were financial planners employed by Australia's largest, most profitable

bank. Or, was their attention focussed through a blinkered capitalist lens that caused them to not want to know?

Silvia Gherardi's research focus is on atmosphere attunement to Kathleen Stewart's 'ordinary affects' (2007), often disregarded as irrelevant by the orthodoxy who 'position the researcher as a disembodied and external observer of life' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 218). 'Ordinary affects' are significant not in their everyday meanings and representations but in the intensities they build, the 'continual motion of relations, scenes, contingencies and emergences' produced through 'the varied, surging capacities to affect and be affected' (Stewart, 2007, p. 4), and the thoughts and feelings they make possible (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 211). The shared ground of an 'affective atmosphere' is an aesthetic experience (Strati, 2009) from where affect can emerge through our bodily senses:

Atmospheres surround people, things and environments: on entering a room, we can feel a serene or a tense atmosphere; an atmosphere 'surrounds' a couple, or one finds oneself 'enveloped' by an atmosphere; atmospheres 'radiate' from one individual to another; atmospheres are contagious, they appear, and disappear' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 211).

Bertelsen and Murphie (2010) provide a cautionary example of affect from 2001 Australian politics that significantly involved and impacted on Customs and Border Protection, where I was working. This example, *The Red Ship on the Horizon*, involves 'an image that bled into the power to affect and be affected by that collection of bodies included in, or excluded from, "Australia"' (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, p. 138). It went like this:

The Red Ship on the Horizon

In 2001, just weeks before September 11, events involving a red, Norwegian freighter and 438 mostly Afghani refugees changed the political territory of Australia [...] A red ship appeared on the horizon [...] The political horizon was that of a desperate conservative government (that of John Howard and his coalition of Liberal and National parties) facing an election and almost certain defeat. The Australian government used the incident of the red ship (and others – such as the "children overboard affair") to turn likely defeat in an election into a "dark victory" (Marr and Wilkinson 2003) [...] In the images that provided the "aesthetic impact of a floating red hulk" (Mitropoulos and Neilsen 2006), this was first and foremost [...] a singular,

intense “red shipness” on a general horizon [...] On board were 438 refugees (mostly Afghani) who had been rescued by the Norwegian freighter MV Tampa on August 26, from a small, Indonesian fishing boat [...] The Australian government “wanted Indonesians to take responsibility for the problem” [...] (Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 3) [...] the Howard government denied “the Tampa permission to enter Australian Territorial waters” (Maley 2004, 154) [...] the Tampa’s captain, Arne Rinnan, decided to enter Australian territorial waters near Christmas Island. His ship was eventually taken over by Australian special troops [...] the government would not allow the media, or even the Red Cross, on board. There was to be no visual evidence of defenceless and desperate people or leaky little fishing boats (Burnside, n.d.). The red ship provided an entirely different aesthetic [...] Personalization was resisted, giving the event a very different feel [...] of “pre-personal” affective forces into a variable “texture” – what Stern calls a “temporal contour” (Stern 2004, 62). The image of the Tampa had a slow, drawn-out contour, an almost immobile intensity. Its refraining – in tabloid newspapers, the nightly news – created an insistent, unresolved stubbornness: a redness sitting on the horizon that would not easily go away. It could have been a metaphor for threat or rescue [...] the new functions that emerged within the new existential territory marked by the red ship [...] the red ship refrain now bleeding into what was becoming a culture entrained to be wary of anything that hinted at “softness” [...] The aggressivity began to be played out against a series of abstract targets held in place by the red ship: “refugees”, international laws and obligations, international shipping, compassion. Like all aggressivity, it was polarizing. Everything became a matter of attack and defense. Everyone had to have an opinion [...] A new territory had opened for political contest on terms much more suitable not only to the Australian government but to conservatives around the world [...] It allowed a remix of “border protection” and “national security” that densely interwove the psychic and the social, the legal and the geographic. The red ship made further refrains possible. In its wake, the prime minister brilliantly, darkly, victoriously stated, “We decide who comes into this country and the circumstances in which they come (in Marr and Wilkinson 2003, 277). This was classic discursive refraining of ambiguous affective powers within an increasingly broad and enduring existential territory. It confused an increasingly presidential-style “fathering of the nation” with a “we” that was itself an open assemblage of a political party, a government, and a fairly homogeneous image

of like-minded “real” citizens (from which of course many were excluded) [...] (Bertelsen & Murphie, 2010, pp. 141-145).

Examples such as *The Red Ship on the Horizon* reinforce the significance of ‘ordinary affects’ identified by Stewart (2007) and appropriated by Gherardi (2017a). Gherardi’s argument is not that ‘ordinary affects’ are just part and parcel of the working practices of practitioners and researchers but, rather, that ‘ordinary affects’ are made present by atmosphere attunement and embodied writing that call for experimentations in doing fieldwork and writing about it (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 218). I contend that this is where the potential exists for creative practice, and here creative writing, to support new forms of learning and knowledge in leadership, management and organizational studies.

As such, by focusing on affect and how the act of doing or the performative act of making can contribute to ways of knowing (Batty, 2016), a process philosophy sense of the lived experience in terms of how we experience the world can be created. Once again, Parks’ potter ‘must learn that clay has its own life, its own potential and limits, its own integrity . . . and if you work with it, it will teach you its strength, your limits, and the possibilities of co-creation’ (Parks, 2005, p. 211). In short, in the embodied lived experience of creative practice, the capacity to affect and be affected emerges within both the medium and maker through the radiating shimmering intensity of their emergent co-creation.

Surfacing

In Chapter 4, the capacity for affect to permeate organizational life was made clear for us by Fotaki, Kenny and Vachhani (2017) who argue that it profoundly influences the motivation and political behaviour of people and intensely impacts leader-follower relations. According to Williams (2013), the creation of layers of complexity in a creative artefact – here, the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript – can surface emotion. Through this PhD, I contend that it can also enable atmosphere attunement to surface affect. Paying attention to ordinary affects in the minutiae of organizational life enhances the capacity for deeper, broader, balanced critical reflection.

To operate in the here and now, using the situational present of making to reflect who we are and what the world means to us (Batty, 2016), might help to allow organizational actors to reframe the objective from developing authentic leaders to authentically developing

leadership (Conroy, 2015). The layers of complexity described by Williams (2013) involve the integration of the creative and the critical (Sawtell, 2016) which conveys wisdom, capability and knowledgeability (Benjamin 1970a, p. 86, cited by Nash 2014, p. 98; Harper, 2007).

As 'creative practice research is a combination of creative and critical elements, not one plus the other' (Lee et al. 2015), the shift is away from binary positions of one or the other towards a co-existence that strives for balance, harmony and completeness. Reinforcing the methodological considerations detailed earlier in this PhD, Harris and Holman Jones (2016) reject the view that performance is embodied and writing is merely a record of the event. They contend that writing and performance are two arms on the same body, arguing that writing is equally an affective physical practice of making, doing and reflecting; a creative practice *and* a critical practice (Harris & Holman Jones, 2016). The inadequacy of a purely scientific perspective has been highlighted by leadership and management scholars and philosophers alike, despite the disparate focus of their work. In this PhD, I am arguing for a bringing together of ideas in terms of the degree of balance we bring to the study of organizations and, specifically, leadership. Distinct similarities exist between the science, art and philosophy claims of Deleuze and Guattari (1994), the science, art and craft of Mintzberg (2005) and the manager, artist, priest of Hatch et al. (2006). Within each set of three elements, each element has a different focus regarding understanding and knowledge yet have always gleaned learning from each other to make linkages in the process of enquiry that are necessary in the interests of broader more complete outcomes.

According to Deleuze and Guattari, philosophy thinks with concepts; science thinks with functions; and art thinks with sensations (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994; Wood, 2018). Management scholar Mintzberg (2005) argues for the balancing of art, craft and science in a managerial style where art represents vision and creative insights, craft represents practical experience and science represents facts and analysis (Mintzberg, 2005, pp. 92-3). According to Mintzberg, science contributes systematic analysis in the form of inputs and assessments, art contributes comprehensive synthesis in the form of insights and visions and craft contributes dynamic learning in the form of actions and experiments (Ibid). Similarly, Mary Jo Hatch and her colleagues argue that 'the realm of business pursues technical rationality to the heights of practical accomplishment, the realm of art provokes creativity to plum the depths of human expression, and the spiritual realm seeks ultimate perfection of the human spirit (Hatch, et al.,

2006, p. 66). Consistently, these scholars argue for essential acknowledgement of the presence and harmonious interaction between all three elements highlighted in their respective studies.

According to Hatch et al., 'The highest levels of leadership obtain only when technical rationality, creativity and inspiration are combined' (Ibid.). In Figure 15 below, the Models for Balanced Leadership are presented.

Deleuze and Guattari		Mintzberg		Hatch et al.	
Science	thinks with functions	Science	represents facts and analysis	Manager (business)	pursues technical rationality to the heights of practical accomplishment
Art	thinks with sensations	Art	represents vision and creative insights	Artist (art)	provokes creativity to plum depths of human expression
Philosophy	thinks with concepts	Craft	represents practical experience	Priest (spiritual)	seeks ultimate perfection of the human spirit

Figure 15 Models for Balanced Leadership

According to Lee et al. (2015) in their discussion of writing screenplays for the creative practice PhD, 'the nexus of the creative and the exegetical work is not whether one speaks to an aesthetic quality, industry or artistic satisfaction or one speaks to the academy, but how they might co-exist and inform one another' (Lee et al., 2015, p. 93). The powerful consequence of such a co-existence is that it shifts the dissertation (exegesis) from 'a critical explanation of the creative work to a creative-critical driving force that results in the creative work' (Ibid). Insights such as those of Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Mintzberg (2005), Hatch et al. (2006), Parks (2005) and Lee et al. (2015) have assisted my quest for authentic, ethical organizational leadership, which for a scholar using creative writing as a mode of research within organisational studies, is intended to result in a creative artefact that 'thinks'; a playscript that

evokes an affective atmosphere that surrounds, envelopes and radiates from one individual to another from which a tiny fissure might emerge for sensemaking in research and practice, both in business and arts contexts.

How such an artefact might be used beyond its creation remains an open possibility. In the case of *Work. Life. Balance.* it could be employed for leadership development either through the staging of a theatre production or in its written form where the subjective experience in the performative act of reading might elicit new 'leadership' insights to emerge for the reader. If not already obvious, for reasons that will become clearer in future chapters, a theatre production would best be staged in the context of an entire workplace where all people involved in the workplace are invited to participate as audience members, as distinct from a 'novel development' opportunity for valued 'leaders'. How this can be impactful for organizations and the people who contribute to their existence can be gleaned through the education insights of Susan Davis (2013) and Dorothy Heathcote (1983), especially in relation to the way *time* is used in drama, which is worth repeating:

Let's consider that matter or those people, we are 'here' (in time and space) pondering on the matters 'over there'. But in drama you can't do that, because suddenly you are walking in the time of the event [...] It's the pressure, or the authenticity, of that dramatic moment that creates the new knowledge, that makes different connections, and that suddenly brings connections that have been dormant in my previous knowledge into active use in making sense of new information I encounter (Heathcote, 1983, p. 695).

Learning to swim

Dateline – 2017 to 2019 – Melbourne Australia – University undergraduate management subjects

Two words which commonly appear in university management subjects under a variety of topics are 'empathy' and 'empowerment'. An example of the use of 'empathy' appeared in Chapter 2. Such words generally appear amongst a 'list' of words from theory related to fields associated with the management of people. The thinking tends to be presented to students in a manner suggesting that, by adhering to this list, effective management of people will follow. Indeed, over my many years of HR practice on selection panels interviewing applicants for

promotion to 'positions of leadership', the words empathy and empowerment were so-called 'buzz-words' that most well-rehearsed interviewees ensured they would weave into their responses to interview questions. Examples such as: 'I always empower my staff to have input [...]' or 'when a leader empowers their staff, they feel validated and have greater ownership and perform better [...]' are reasonable statements that have merit. However, my sense is that these statements, and PowerPoint lecture slides that support them, are 'over there' statements.

When interviewees are pressed in terms of extrapolating their use and meaning of the words, the discussion becomes vastly more difficult, and not only because of the understandable pressure of an interview environment. The question 'Can you teach someone to be a leader?' has been raised numerous times by peers, staff and students in my experience and my answer has always been fundamentally the same: '*Can you teach someone to care?*' It is neither desirable nor realistic to assume that we can impose our values on others in a free society. Yet what are we to do when examples abound in organizations where abuse of leadership power, both formal and informal power, has had, at times unnecessarily, a detrimental effect on the lives of people? If, as Bauman (2009) asserts, 'the game' is being played with us, whether or not we want to play the 'make-believe' game of 'free' players, then is it reasonable that we should try to find a variety of ways, using a range of different perspectives, to help us to navigate our way through it, especially when seas are stormy? How are we to generate understanding on a local level, so that each person can find their own place to stand in relation to terms such as empathy and empowerment?

In 2016, when I began teaching tutorials in management, the diversity of students and classes appeared to call for a range of teaching methods. Rightly or wrongly, when I have sensed that an arts-based, creative teaching pedagogy might assist the learning of a particular class, I have taken the risk to explore those methods. This was only possible when specific students in the class seemed open to an experimental challenge and confident enough to 'perform' for their peers.

Since completion of the EMA in 2013, I have been heartened by unsolicited feedback received about my work. In her review of *The Myth of Themanus*, Associate Professor Clare O'Callaghan, a music therapist in cancer and palliative care settings, described how the work resonated for her:

Alongside revealing that there is, indeed, also an “I” in “TEAM”, *The Myth of Themanus* expanded my view of workplace winners, losers, and environments conducive to ethical collegiality. It was a humorous, engaging, albeit sometimes confronting read, eliciting and reframing many personal work-life memories. In an accessible, artistic form *The Myth of Themanus* reinforces that leadership is a privilege with serious consequences for the lives of others and the welfare of organisations. Art, in this case applied theatre, allows different ways of hearing, seeing, and tolerating the actual (Gersie, 1991). *The Myth of Themanus* compels us to challenge non-empowering work settings and to consider how we all share responsibility for improving our workplaces’ positive cultures (O’Callaghan, 2016).

Feedback such as this inspired me to pursue further research in the area and experiment with it in a university teaching setting. Now that the PhD has brought new ideas and theories to my work, I have been able to critically reflect on my previous work and am now seeing it in a new light.

The Reflections below are intended to animate the words of O’Callaghan, Heathcote and others as practical small-scale examples, in addition to existing examples in the field, of the potential beneficial impact of arts-based methods in business education, including in the potential use of the playscript, *Work. Life. Balance*. In the first reflection below, the focus was on the word *empowerment* whereas the second reflection has its emphasis on the word *empathy*.



Reflections
Reflections

Experimental

Taking a risk and following my gut regarding the capacity, interest and learning value of having two business management students perform or read an excerpt from a playscript was considered a calculated risk worth taking in terms of honourable intent and respect for the

participants, both the student performers and the student 'audience'. I approached two students in each of the classes where this approach was taken, separately outside of class and canvassed their views about the proposal to perform a short scene from *The Myth of Themanus*. Only once has a student not felt comfortable to 'perform' so they have chosen to play their role as part of the 'audience', with my full understanding, support and appreciation. The audience has a role to perform as the scene breaks through the 'fourth wall' when one character (manager Themanus) addresses the audience directly and requires all audience members to commit to a position.

The Players

Themanus: a struggling new manager in a large olive production company

Serendipitus: an experienced team leader working under the ambitious, ruthless management command of Themanus.

The Setting

In earlier scenes, Themanus has been heavily criticised by senior management above him, his management peers laugh at him behind his back and undermining staff neither trust nor respect him. In frustrated desperation after fortuitously bumping into each other at the local supermarket, Themanus swallows his pride and asks his subordinate, Serendipitus, for advice.

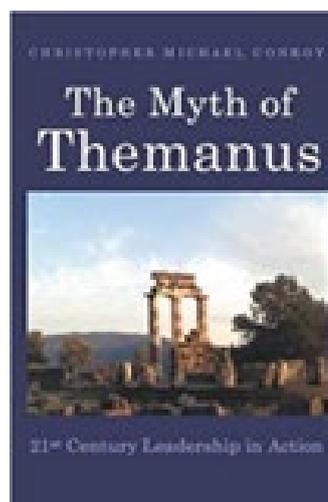


Figure 16 The Myth of Themanus (Them-an'-us)

Students performed a short excerpt of Socratic dialogue from ACT 2 Scene 2 of the play.

SERENDIPITUS: But how do you get staff to do things right?

THEMANUS [pauses]: ... You ... EMPOWER them!

SERENDIPITUS: OK, but what does *that* actually mean?

THEMANUS: What do *you* mean?

SERENDIPITUS: Well, let's look at it this way. Thinking of yourself as a manager, consider this statement:

"As an effective leader, I am going to empower my staff."

Do you agree with the statement? Is it a good statement?

[THEMANUS breaks the fourth wall by turning to the [student] audience telling them that he/she is going to need some help. He/she asks the audience what they think.

He/she makes the audience commit to a position by asking everyone to stand up.

Then he/she asks them to sit down if they think it is a good statement.

[After seeing most audience members sit down (if so) THEMANUS returns to SERENDIPITUS.]

THEMANUS: I'm going to say: Yes, absolutely, empowerment of staff is a good thing.

SERENDIPITUS: But who actually has the power in the statement?

[THEMANUS pauses, partly to allow 'think time' for the audience and looks puzzled.]

THEMANUS: I'm ... um ... not sure.

SERENDIPITUS *[pointing to the 'I' in the statement]*: I do! And I can equally *disempower* my staff whenever it suits me! The statement is a deception. It is not authentic. Can you see?

[THEMANUS leans-in, as if to peer closely at the 'I'.]

SERENDIPITUS: What might a better statement be, Themanus?

THEMANUS: Isn't empowerment of staff supposed to be giving the power to the staff?

SERENDIPITUS: Well, yes, sort of. But some staff might not want the power. Some staff might just want someone to tell them what to do and how to think.

THEMANUS *[indignantly]*: But that's just being dependent. Aren't we supposed to be adults?

SERENDIPITUS: Exactly. So how can staff become empowered?

THEMANUS: They have to *want* to become empowered!

SERENDIPITUS: So how can the leader help staff to *want* to become empowered?

THEMANUS [*guessing*]: I suppose by letting them know it's possible ...?

SERENDIPITUS: And how will staff know it is possible?

THEMANUS: By telling them ... and establishing procedures and guidelines?

SERENDIPITUS: Yees, possibly. So, are you saying you would create the environment for staff ...?

THEMANUS [*excitedly*]: Yes, exactly that!

SERENDIPITUS: Have a go at finishing the statement for me now then, Themanus: As an effective leader, I am going to ...?

THEMANUS [*confidently*]: ... create an environment of empowerment for staff.

SERENDIPITUS: OK, but what does that actually mean? Who is empowering whom? Am I still doing the empowering?

THEMANUS: No, staff are empowering themselves.

SERENDIPITUS: Great. So back to the statement are you now saying:

“As an effective leader, I am going to create an environment where staff can *choose* to empower themselves.”

THEMANUS: Yes, that's right.

SERENDIPITUS: So, the choice is owned by staff not the leader, is that right?

THEMANUS [*tentatively*]: I think so.

SERENDIPITUS [*facing the audience, pointing his thumb back towards Themanus*]: And I think that's a good start.

Following this student 'performance' a lively class discussion ensued to unpack the issues contained within it. Whilst this was not part of the formal curriculum and no specific survey

feedback was conducted, the animated input from most students and positive course feedback for tutorials where the 'performance' took place appeared to support the risk that was taken.



Reflections
Reflections

Existential

The year is 2018 and we are in an inner-city university campus Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing tutorial with undergraduate students mostly from engineering courses including civil, mechanical, electrical and aerospace engineering and mainstream management. The course content comprises a wide range of important legal, technical and theoretical learning requirements which need to be fully covered. A range of case studies are employed to reinforce learning outcomes and effective tools such as tables, charts, risk level matrices (Archer, 2018) and other materials related to risk assessment and consequences (WorkSafe Victoria, 2017). In short, the course provides highly relevant course content to help students understand their OH&S responsibilities in terms of the 'what' and 'how' of Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing.

Whilst not considered as part of the course content, the inner circle of Simon Sinek's The Golden Circle (Figure 17), which focusses on the 'why' question, is covered primarily through the outcomes detailed in case studies. For example, the machinery did not have the correct safety guard in place when the employee decided to lean inside the machine to remove an obstacle that was preventing the machine from operating correctly. Outcome: the worker died or was injured, and the manager was prosecuted under OHS or WHS legislation.

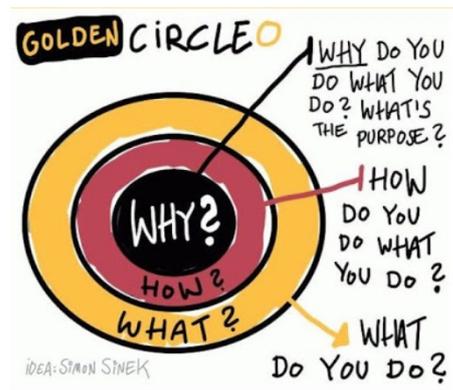


Figure 17 The Golden Circle (Simon Sinek, 2011)

This is a good lesson for students to learn. But might it also be a case of ‘over there’ learning? In Chapter 3 we considered the traditional management linear cause-and-effect approach as the easiest, most efficient method of problem-solving, for example the US-led response to global terrorism. This was based on the simple assumption that terrorism is a threat that simply exists ‘out there’ – separate from us.

My decision to experiment with another creative practice approach was also a risk. Once again, I could feel it in my heart and my gut that we need to do more with WHSW for our students, but I couldn’t bring myself to ask ‘permission’ from the course coordinator, for fear of a less than enthusiastic response that might ultimately block the experimental initiative.

During the class, students and I discussed relevant theory and, at one point in the discussion, two small signs were held up. Students were asked to explain the meaning of each word on the signs, including how their meaning might differ.

Sympathy?

Empathy?

At the end of our tutorial class it was a lunch break. A poll was taken to see how many students (if any) were interested or available to share lunch together in the outside sunshine where we could continue to discuss the course content. All appeared keen. ‘OK, then, I’ll be heading outside and anyone who wants to join-in, pack-up your things and we’ll be going for a walk.’ Down the escalator of the vertical College of Business campus and into the busy city street. Turn left and less than three blocks away the focus of the prior tutorial was upon us.

It is a Grocon building development site of the former Carlton and United Breweries (CUB) factory, which sits directly across the street from the headquarters of the Construction, Forestry, Maritime, Mining and Energy Union (CFMEU).

The bluestone memorial is poignant in its simplicity. It contains a eulogy of words chiselled in stone about the three innocent, unsuspecting victims who died at this spot in 2013. There is only one photo on the memorial. The image is of university researcher Marie-Faith Fiawoo, a citizen of France, who happened to be walking along the footpath of this central city street arterial when a brick wall on the perimeter of the development site collapsed, crushing and killing her. The photos of two other victims, brother and sister university students Bridget and Alexander Jones, were not displayed at the memorial, by request of their forlorn parents. Bridget was eighteen years old when she died tragically and Alexander was only one year older. They were walking to the city train station to head home to their family after a day of undergraduate classes at The University of Melbourne.

As the WHSW students and I stood respectfully at the memorial site in the entrance foyer of the grand, luxurious new high rise building that now stands on the site, we paused for reflection. I handed each student a fact sheet of the outcome of the WorkSafe prosecution in which Grocon was convicted and fined \$250,000 for safety risk management failings. The building company had not safely secured the freestanding wall and advertising hoarding that caused the wall's collapse in strong winds. The fact sheet also contained one smiling photo of Ian and Sue Jones with Bridget and Alexander, and another of the parents being consoled at their children's funeral. As the students and I stood quietly in the street, amidst the hustle and bustle of economic and social activity buzzing all around us, a hand-drawn image of The Golden Circle was shared and students were asked to reflect on the 'Why' of Workplace Health Safety and Wellbeing.

CFMEU and Grocon Swanston Square wall collapse



Bridget Jones (18)



Alexander Jones (19)



Marie-Faith Fiawoo

Figure 18 Empathy

At the end of our lunch-break, the cohort of mostly engineering students, aged between 19 and 25, were encouraged to write their own reflective account of our post-tutorial 'live' session – for themselves, not for any assessment. As a case-in-point pedagogical method, the psychological safety and wellbeing of each student was paramount and clearly communicated. Their personal reflection did not require perfect grammar, spelling, WHSW theory or referencing and could be written from the perspective of their choice. A range of examples of possible perspectives they might like to choose were provided, including from the perspective of the deceased, the parents, the police officers knocking on the door of the parents' homes to break the tragic news, the managers of the companies involved, the workers at the scene, other witnesses, the rescue crew, paramedics, the CFMEU delegates and the coroner. The students were offered time and support to write their piece and told 'it is for yourself and nobody else will read it unless you would like them to'.

There is no tangible evidence to categorically prove that this post-tutorial experience was successful. It was conducted only on two occasions at the end of one tutorial in each of semesters one and two in 2018. At the end of each semester, the university asks students to complete a course experience survey (CES) and those who voluntarily make the time to complete the survey give a rating on the good teaching scale (GTS) for their specific tutorial group. Comments from the Head of School and the WHSW course coordinator suggest that a CES GTS result of 100% in both semesters was an uncommon achievement. The experienced

course coordinator's comments about his self-confessed 'largely dry, technical subject' was: 'I don't know what you're doing in that class, but whatever it is, keep doing it.' In terms of my PhD, which had been unrelated to the teaching experiments, this experience highlighted the benefit of shared affective experience and atmosphere attunement, in-the-moment.

Personally, I was moved by the experience, both that these undergraduate students cared enough to do this in their own time and then, after the jokes and banter during the walk subsided, they generously engaged respectfully in an unexpected solemn moment at a memorial. I understand that this is merely my *representation* of the event, but the bodily sense of an 'atmosphere' surrounding those present seemed to radiate from one individual to another. To observe students in the performative act of writing their own subjective piece, for themselves, had a poignancy that I find difficult to describe. I suspect some struggled and were challenged by the writing, but they appeared to trust the process, knowing that no-one else would ever see their typed or scribbled words. I remain hopeful that, for the students involved, previously dormant connections to knowledge had been brought into active use in making sense of new information they encountered. This has now become partly my hope for the future use of *Work. Life. Balance*.



Leakage

In his book *Leaders We Deserve*, Alistair Mant quotes Sigmund Freud: 'Write it, write it, put it down in black and white ... Get it out, produce it, make something of it – outside you, that is, give it an existence independently of you' (Mant, 1998, p. 68). Citing a question from an anxious mother to Albert Einstein for tips on the best starting-out literature for a budding physicist, Mant notes Einstein's reply: 'Fairy stories'. When the mother pressed: 'And after that?' Einstein replied: 'More fairy stories!' Mant also appropriates Bateson who argued that 'the healthy intellect and our communication skills would not develop without the use of paradox, metaphor, fantasy and humour' (Ibid.).

Philosopher and organization consultant Jason Fox (2016) likes to court doubt and advocates anti-fragile brooding through creative curiosity to assist with problem-solving. For Fox, this period of angst can help to reveal more of ourselves in a more authentic manner.

Fox doesn't argue that people are ever not authentic. He believes that in some contexts we feel psychologically less safe, we don a particular mask or armour or only show a particular aspect that will help us to survive in that particular world. He contends that more authenticity comes with comfort, psychological safety and willingness to reveal more of the parts of ourselves, even the parts that are in conflict with each other (Fox, 2016).

Fox describes activities that encourage curiosity, which include doing new and unusual things, reading books, walking on a beach, creative writing, sitting under a shady tree, brooding etc. However, Fox notes that when viewed through a capitalist productivity lens, none of that looks productive or efficient – it looks like 'you are squandering time'. Fox argues that if we are not careful and we allow such a view to mature too deeply, we begin to experience an 'atrophy of empathy' where people stop relating to each other as people, viewing each other as cogs in a machine, relating to each other as our organization chart role description.

Advocating for more 'fruitful dialogue' via 'blue-collar writing' while specifically targeting elitist academics defending 'scholarship for the few' as distinct from fruitful dialogue with the many, qualitative researcher Graham Badley argues that overly-technical bureaucrats:

risk turning people into things. They risk reifying the very people their research and writing are meant to help (Badley, 2016, p. 513).

On 1 July 2015, the Australian Border Force (ABF) was formed, following the merger of Customs and Border Protection with the Department of Immigration. To establish the new agency, the Australian Government spent over \$10million supplying '4500 ABF officials with new uniforms, insignia, name badges, buttons and safety helmets', rebranding with ABF livery '300 vehicles, including boats, helicopters and other aircraft', erecting approximately 9000 new ABF signs at international airports, seaports, depots, offices, immigration detention facilities and replacing thousands of port and date stamps for official paperwork (Hasham, 2015).

Nicole Hasham (2015) juxtaposes this expenditure against an Australian Senate hearing in June 2015, at which detention centre workers described the "horrendous" clothing situation for Nauru detention camp detainees:

"Parents actually had to cut holes in their [children's] sneakers because their feet were growing too much and their shoes were too small," said former worker Samantha Betts.

"Children would often ask us to help fix their thongs, which we tried to do on several occasions [...] with bread ties and bits of string."

Another case worker said a pair of pink hotpants had been provided to an elderly Burmese woman to wear as shorts (Ibid.).

In his 2019 cartoon at Figure 19 Michael Leunig captures the mood of the border protection milieu.



Figure 19 Border Force (Leunig, 2019) [Image courtesy of Michael Leunig].

Arguably, this economic, social and political imbalance appears to be cruel, inhumane and unjust. This view is evidenced by the range of plays chronicling the plight of asylum seekers via testimonial or verbatim theatre (Cox, 2013) detailed in Chapter 4, which seek to guide the audience to view the asylum seeker issue through a particular representational lens. However, it is not only the plight of asylum seekers in detention centres that warrants attention.

A variety of possible reasons exist for significant public expenditure to supply new uniforms, insignia, name badges, buttons and safety helmets to all ABF staff. These include a duty of care to staff, desire for a professional agency image and, more strategically, as an affective measure to representatively amplify the militarised presence of the newly minted 'Force'. Nicole Hasham (2018b) would appear to relegate the likelihood of the former being the primary reason as 'duty of care to staff' is inconsistent with an organisation in which 'one in five Border Force staff reported being bullied or harassed at work in the past year and the same proportion had suffered discrimination' (Hasham, 2018b). The Australian Border Force

Commissioner dismissed the publicly growing claims of a 'toxic culture' as 'not correct', despite conceding that bullying and harassment issues 'are all too common in our society and within many organisations and we are not immune'" (Ibid.).

Furthermore, the tragic suicides of ABF staff and claims of 'rampant bullying and harassment' received a revealing management response from an ABF Assistant Commissioner. In a succinct email to staff, the Assistant Commissioner 'said "we acknowledge that we haven't invested sufficiently in the ABF College", including the workforce and curriculum' (Hasham, 2018a) which raises serious questions.

To what extent is 'investment', particularly financial investment, the key management consideration in matters of suicide and psychological harm resulting from a toxic workplace culture of bullying and harassment? What 'management-speak' message in terms of human care and decency might the ABF Assistant Commissioner references to investment and 'curriculum' send to staff whose lives have been impacted by work-related death and mental injury? Might the atrophy of empathy to which Jason Fox refers be a more relevant starting point to address such a seemingly toxic culture? If so, is a scientific instrumental management response the best means to address this? Or might a more balanced, holistic response that encompasses science, art and craft (Mintzberg, 2005) or science, art and philosophy (Deleuze and Guattari, 1994), or business, art and the spiritual (Hatch et al. 2006) increase the chances of culture change regarding the safety and welfare of people in the organisation?

In hindsight, perhaps the monthly reports of EAP Carly regarding management bullying, detailed previously in the Chapter 4 Reflections, were closer to the truth than her corporate boss was prepared to admit; and if taken seriously enough at the time by management executives, they may have prevented the employee loss of life and psychological harm that continues to this day.

According to Jason Fox, by leaving the dominant neo liberal capitalist productivity lens unchecked, we ultimately limit our empathy to current and emerging trends in the economic markets, embroiling ourselves in an insular pending doom that can feed upon our impending irrelevance (Fox, 2016). Like Joseph Schumpeter (1994 [1942]), Fox sees creativity and destruction as two sides of the same coin and in our constant struggle for business transformation, a rich delusion of progress creeps into our being, preventing access to finding new and meaningful solutions. Following *The Artist's Way* of Julia Cameron (1992), Fox uses

the unconstrained daily writing ritual with a view to creating space for beautiful, brilliant, unexpected, things to emerge in the process of resolving complex problems (Fox, 2016).

When I began this PhD in 2016, I was unaware that Australian Border Force would be challenged with such deep, tragic, cultural issues. Creative writing and the power of theatre-based education has the potential to make a positive difference in organizations, including ABF, no matter how small that difference might be. As such, I am attempting to bring an experimental, not-knowing, creative practice approach that creates space for ‘lines of flight’, like a leakage that eludes containment oozing out of a box, not to be misunderstood, or misrepresented (by privileged interests), as an escape from reality but ‘to produce the real, to create [or, in the case of ABF, *protect*] a life, to find a weapon’ (Deleuze & Parnet, 1977, p. 47). As Deleuze and Guattari (2007/1987, p. 204) describe it:

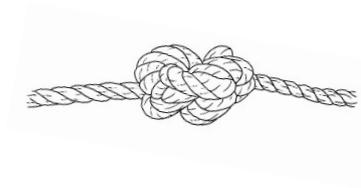
Lines of flight, for their part, never consists in running away from the world but rather causing run-offs, as when you drill a hole in a pipe; there is no social system that does not leak from all directions, even if it makes its segments increasingly rigid in order to seal the lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 2007/1987, p. 204)

Sympathy is an ‘over there’ emotion. Empathy, for some people, as evidenced in the university lecture detailed in Chapter 2, is something that a manager is well-advised to *appear* to have ‘because people will tell you everything’. For others, possibly including some engineering students in a 2018 WHSW class, empathy is an embodied experience of walking in the shoes of the other, to feel their pain, to care about their wellbeing and to see our shared human vulnerability in the suffering of the other.

As Elspeth Probyn observes: ‘Simply put, writing affects bodies. Writing takes its toll on the body that writes, and on the bodies that read, listen or view’ (2010, p. 76). Perhaps too late for the Australian Border Force, but it remains one teacher’s hopeful possibility, that a simple writing process in the safety of one’s own *becoming*, may have reduced the potential for an ‘atrophy of empathy’ in the future management of workplace health, safety and wellbeing in an industry somewhere, sometime in the future.

The Australian Border Force Commissioner says Border Force has addressed the matter through the establishment of a culture and behaviour taskforce and held meetings across Australia to “articulate the vision, mission and new signature values of the ABF”, which includes a zero-tolerance approach to unacceptable behaviour’ (Hasham, 2018b). However,

again we see the linguistic binary at play: acceptable versus unacceptable behaviour. The question remains: Who decides? The powerful or the powerless? If we permit ourselves to 'play' by temporarily floating aside the linear binary perspective to make space for curious experimentation, might we find there is a role for both?



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 5 Scene 1 The Inquisition

[Lights rise on the FIBS board room with empty seats strategically placed in a panel formation around the board room table, two either side of an elevated podium and one single chair opposite. KG enters, stage left, and stands behind the podium, staring at the audience. One-by-one, other characters enter the stage beginning with JUDY, then ROWAN, then WALLY and, finally, RHONDA RADARI. With all of the panel positions occupied, WILL, enters the room and sits in the single chair facing the panel.]

KG *[in a sombre tone, looking towards JUDY]*: Proceedings commenced at 10:30am. In attendance, directors Rowan, Wally and Rhonda, acting for Penny, extended sick leave ... *[Pause.]* ... As you know, this tragedy has huge consequences for our region. We have to contain media coverage. Canberra senior execs. are on their way down to get to the bottom of what happened. State police will want answers. The patrol team we sent down to The Lakes this morning to tow the boat back have found Gino's skipper's hat washed-up on the shore. *[Pause.]* Time is short. We need answers ... *[Pause.]* ... Let's start with why you were out there Will.

WILL *[in a formal tone]*: We were out there on patrol as part of Operation Overland.

RADARI *[subdued, leading]*: And can you briefly explain the importance of the operation, please Will?

WILL *[nervously, towards RHONDA]*: Sure. Overland is a local operation we've been working on for months. It was established in response to reliable intelligence that indicates a credible risk exists regarding the movement of illicit narcotics, specifically cocaine, into local waterways directly from overseas import vessels.

KG: So, what was your role in the mission?

WILL *[hesitantly]*: Well, I was acting as ... in the capacity of ... operation commander ... sort of. You see ... *[pause, eyes lowered]* ... Gino ... *[pause]* ... and I had been working really hard to get the operation off the ground ... *[pause]* ... to establish sufficient evidence in support of the intelligence we were acting on ... I mean before Overland was to be escalated into full operation mode.

RADARI: You and Gino had been making some progress, hadn't you? Nominated for the Key Result Area Performance awards, if I'm not mistaken?

WILL: Yes, we'd already had a few hits and the prospects were looking positive until ... *[pause]*

ROWAN *[interrupting]*: What *exactly* happened on the night of the incident, Will? I mean, you got Oscar and Victor on board to assist the operation but there are all sorts of rumours circulating, about arguments on board that night, alcohol fuelled fights ..?

WILL *[defensively]*: Nah, there were no fights.

KG: Was there alcohol?

WILL [*coy*]: Um ... ah ... small amount ... I mean ... just to share over dinner.

KG [*firmly*]: Whose idea was it to take alcohol on board?

WILL [*sheepish*]: We thought it'd be OK, given it was an overnighter ... and the mission was not technically commencing until the next day ... technically ...

KG [*unmoved*]: Whose idea?

WILL [*looking up at KG's dominant standing position*]: Um ... I can't recall exactly ... look, I don't want to throw anyone under the bus ...

KG [*pressing*]: It must have been someone's idea?

WILL: Well ... let's just say that ... ah ... Victor ... sort of ... brought most of it on board ... but I can't really recall ...

RADARI [*impatiently, looking up to KG*]: Should we just cut to the chase, Ken? [*Turning to WILL*] Who was it that pushed Gino overboard?

WILL: I can't recall.

RADARI: But someone DID push him, Will?

WILL [*blushing under the pressure*]: Um, I can't recall.

RADARI [*with increasing frustration*]: Come on Will! Someone threw Gino overboard, didn't they?

[*WILL, eyes lowered, shrugs his shoulders.*]

RADARI [*pressing*]: Who threw Gino overboard, Will?

WILL [*quietly*]: I don't know.

RADARI: You were on board. There were only three of you with Gino. You must know, Will.

WILL [*pleading*]: I don't.

RADARI [*pressing*]: Was it Oscar?

WILL [*defensively*]: I don't know ... I was inside the cabin and ...

RADARI [*provocatively*]: Is that just an excuse? Was it you, Will?

WILL: NO!

RADARI: Well who was it then? Who threw Gino into the ocean then left him for dead?

WILL: I don't know!

RADARI [*anxiously looking up to KG*]: Can we get Victor in here, please?

[*KG looks toward JUDY and nods, raising his eyes towards the door. JUDY exits the door and returns with VICTOR.*]

KG *[in a grim, sombre tone]*: Victor, you know why you're here, so let's get straight to the facts. How did this tragedy occur?

VICTOR *[hesitantly]*: Well ... it was Gino and Will's idea and they asked me ...

KG *[formally]*: Why were you on the ocean? In a FIBS vessel? In the dark of night?

VICTOR *[looking sideways across the panel]*: We weren't s'posed to be out there but Will decided ...

RADARI *[sternly interrupting]*: Was there alcohol involved?

VICTOR *[evasively]*: That wasn't the reason, I mean, the operation was not planned to begin until the following day ...

RADARI *[sternly]*: Did you have alcohol on board?

[VICTOR stares, in silence, at the panel.]

ROWAN *[pressing]*: Had you been drinking?

VICTOR *[anxiously]*: Yes, but we all had ... I mean, only with dinner ...

RADARI: You realise that's a breach of policy?

WALLY *[curiously]*: Is it true that you are responsible for pushing Gino into the water?

VICTOR: NO! I didn't! What is this ... a stitch-up?

RADARI *[ignoring the question]*: You and Gino were arguing prior to him going overboard, weren't you?

[VICTOR shakes his head then stares across at WILL.]

WILL *[defensively]*: I didn't say anything Victor! I don't know what happened when ...

RADARI *[pressing VICTOR]*: You were angry with him, weren't you?

VICTOR: I wasn't ...

RADARI: So, you charged at him, assaulted him and threw him overboard, didn't you?

VICTOR *[steadfastly]*: That is totally untrue.

[Brief silence as the panel look sideways at each other, pondering how to end the impasse.]

ROWAN *[sombre, to KG]*: Perhaps we should ask Oscar to come in, now?

RADARI *[dismissively, pointing at VICTOR and WILL]*: Only if these two are asked to leave.

[KG nods towards VICTOR and WILL, raising his eyebrows towards the door.]

WILL *[anxiously]*: Oscar will just support whatever Victor says. You can't rely on what he says. They'll just protect each other because they ...

KG *[firmly]*: Let us be the judge of that, Will. *[Motioning towards the door.]* Now, if you will ...

[WILL follows VICTOR through the door, reaching inside his jacket pocket for his phone as OSCAR enters with JUDY.]

KG *[sombre]*: Come in Oscar. Now, I'll warn you: This panel is urgently searching for answers; honest answers to what exactly happened on that boat. Do you understand?

OSCAR *[nervously]*: Of course, Ken. I'll do my best.

KG: So, please ... *[pause]* ... tell us your version of events that occurred on that fateful night.

OSCAR *[innocently]*: Before we hit the mintzberg?

KG *[firmly, impatiently]*: All of it.

OSCAR *[taking a deep breath]*: Well, ... *[pause]* ... Gino and Will recruited Victor and I ... actually they recruited me ... to assist them with an operation to be conducted at The Lakes. I encouraged Gino to take Victor with us, due to his skill set matching the terms of the operation. We set off later in the day than planned so decided to drop anchor for the night in the bay and tackle The Heads and ocean crossing after sunrise the next morning. Unfortunately, that plan did not eventuate ...

[Action shifts to the outside waiting room where WILL is pacing nervously, talking on the phone in an animated fashion. Spotlight returns to the hearing.]

OSCAR: ... so the decision to proceed through The Heads in pitch black darkness was not good.

KG: And you say it was influenced by alcohol?

OSCAR: To a large degree, yes.

RADARI *[aggressively]*: And you would agree that Victor was responsible for the alcohol consumption on board?

OSCAR *[staring back at RHONDA]*: No ... *[choosing his words carefully]* ... I would say that all were responsible for their own alcohol consumption ... except I ...

RADARI *[pressing]*: But you agree that Victor was responsible for the alcohol being on board in the first place?

OSCAR *[innocently]*: No, I don't believe that Victor was any more responsible than others. We all should have known better, given what ultimately happened out there.

RADARI *[provocatively, impatiently]*: I suppose you are also saying that when Victor threw Gino overboard – then left him for dead – that was also everyone's shared responsibility too, was it Oscar?

[OSCAR shakes his head, eyes lowered towards his feet.]

RADARI *[angrily]*: Surely you don't expect us to believe that. This inquiry is after the truth, Oscar. The TRUTH. And the truth is that Victor pushed Gino overboard, then fought with you to stop you from saving him, didn't he Oscar?

[OSCAR remains unmoved.]

RHONDA *[angrily]*: Didn't he?

[RADARI's live facial image appears on the large screen, her nostrils flared, veins bursting in her neck, her eyes a fiery red as droplets of spittle spew from the sides of her pursed lips as she angrily outlines the core allegation.]

RADARI *[loudly]*: Victor Nguyen fully intended to murder Gino Genoa and your continued denials make you nothing more than his active accomplice!

[The door to the hearing room suddenly bursts open as WILL rushes in, his phone in hand and marches towards KG.]

WILL *[standing opposite KG]*: I seek an urgent adjournment to this hearing ... *[stopping suddenly, as if hearing his own voice in a TV drama courtroom]* ... I mean ... *[gasping for breath]* ... in the interests of fairness ...

[A distant voice can be heard from WILL's phone ... procedural fairness ...]

WILL: ... in the interests of procedural fairness ... *[gasping]* ...

[The distant voice continues ... we require a break in proceedings ...]

WILL: ... we require a break in proceedings ... *[switching off the speaker function and talking directly on his phone]* ... What ..? ... OK ... *[Turning to KG]* ... so that further legal advice can be obtained ... under the laws of natural justice.

KG *[puzzled]*: Really? *[Turning to his fellow panel members.]* Um ... I guess we've got some answers but more clarity is needed ..?

[ROWAN nods. RHONDA shrugs, gesturing with palms open whilst giving WILL a quizzical look.]

WALLY *[distractedly scrolling on his own phone but confidently offering advice]*: Would look better in the report, Ken ... I mean ... natural justice ... will help give your conclusions the appearance of fairness.

KG *[still musing]*: Okay. Okay ... I think we might ... I think we'll adjourn proceedings for two hours. Return at 1pm.

[Lights fade as WILL grabs OSCAR by the elbow and leads him away towards the exit.]

ACT 5 Scene 2 The Deal

[Lights rise as WILL leads OSCAR along the corridor towards a private room.]

OSCAR: What was that all about Will? Where's Victor?

WILL *[in a hushed voice]*: Stressing out. Gone for a smoke. We need to talk, quickly.

OSCAR *[hesitantly]*: ... Righto then.

WILL *[still hushed]*: We're all in the shit here, Oscar. Careers ruined. We've got to get our stories straight.

OSCAR *[bemused]*: I'm just telling them the truth, Will. What are you telling them?

WILL [*anxiously, pleading to be understood*]: I'm telling the truth, too, but I guess ... I'm just trying to make sure that all our versions of the truth are the same.

OSCAR: I don't get it.

WILL: Look Oscar, I can help to get you out of the shit, or at least minimise the damage, if you do the same for me.

OSCAR: What exactly d'ya have in mind?

WILL: Well, you know I didn't see what happened ... I mean ... I was asleep.

OSCAR: Yeah and?

WILL: So, if you could back me up on that ... I dunno ... tell 'em I was ill, on medication or somethin' and wanted to be fit for the operation next day ... just don't tell 'em I was pissed or that I tried to drive the boat through The Heads.

OSCAR: Deceit by omission? Is that what you're asking for Will?

WILL [*pleading*]: Would make my story more believable ... I mean ... they think I'm lying ... they think I must know what happened but you know I wasn't there when Gino went under ... I just don't want them to know why I wasn't there.

OSCAR: Who was that on your phone in there?

[As WILL looks away, in silence, musical drum beats fade-in as the band Hunters and Collectors' song 'When the River Runs Dry' begins playing, quietly at first then building to the chorus after WILL'S final words in the scene.]

OSCAR: Lawyer?

[WILL shrugs a semi-positive response, then returns to 'the deal'.]

WILL: I'm prepared to paint you totally as the hero, Oscar. The guy who didn't drink, who navigated us through The Heads, showed courage and leadership in a crisis – even more than poor Gino. I'll say that [*placing his hand on his heart*]. True.

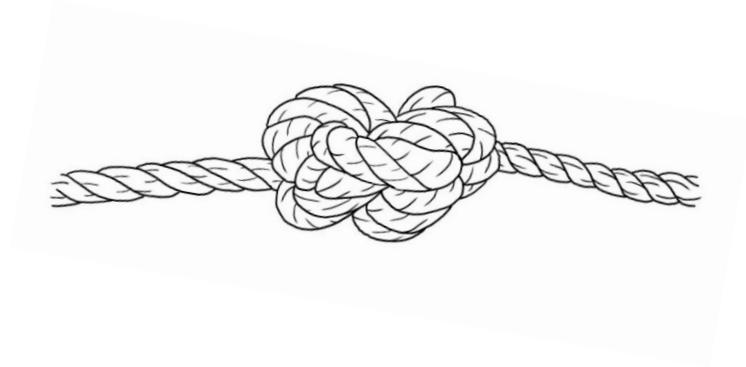
[OSCAR remains silent.]

WILL [*emotionally*]: We've gotta try to get out of this bloody mess we're in.

[OSCAR remains silent.]

WILL [*more rationally*]: Least we've bought time, I guess ... [*pause*] ... the patrol team down at The Lakes might find something useful before our busted boat goes onto the trailer for towing back here.

[Lights fade. Music 'When the River Runs Dry' builds into the chorus then fades after the singing of lyrics: 'you will return to the scene of the crime; when the river runs dry, salvation will rain on you one more time' <https://youtu.be/eD-58aVIPYk?t=196>]



VI AN EVEN KEEL

The river was the way to freedom ... I was powerful glad to get away from the feuds, and so was Jim to get away from the swamp. We said there warn't no home like a raft, after all. Other places do seem so cramped up and smothery, but a raft don't. You feel mighty free and easy and comfortable on a raft.

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*.

In the previous chapter, I examined the nature of 'atmospheres' and the value of atmosphere attunement to affective embodied sensations that emerge within atmospheres. In short, listening to our bodies, paying attention to ordinary affects. We have been focussed on the intense capacity for affect to permeate organisational life and profoundly influence the motivation, behaviour and engagement of people in organisations. In this PhD, I am arguing that paying attention to ordinary affects in the minutiae of organisational life enhances the capacity for deeper, broader, balanced critical reflection, enabling us to see things previously hidden, particularly regarding relational leadership.

I maintain that creative practice research is a methodology that can help us to improve organisational leadership outcomes by operating in the here-and-now, using the situational present of experimental 'making' to reflect who we are and what the world means to us (Batty, 2016). I also contend that the creation of layers of complexity in a creative artefact – here, the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript – is a helpful scriptology (Rhodes, 2018) which can surface affects, captured in the form of emotion, not only through audience engagement with an in-the-moment theatrical performance but also in the performative act of reading a playscript.

A raft of change

The vast ocean tides are retreating again and the blurred glimpses of rockpools begin forming in our gaze as their nascent resurfacing unfurls ...

As Fotaki, Kenny and Vachhani (2017) have shown us, affect intensely impacts leader-follower relations. In Chapters 3 and 4 of this PhD, almost unanimous acceptance amongst a large number of scholars has been evident that 'leadership' requires a leader, a follower and a situation (Taylor, 2018; Munro & Thanem 2018; Einola & Alvesson 2019; Rosenhead, Francob,

Grint & Friedland, 2019; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Ropo & Salovaara, 2019; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Chatwani, 2018; Jones, 2017; Collinson & Tourish, 2015; Tourish & Tourish, 2010; Ladkin & Spiller 2013; Fleming, Millar & Culpin 2018; Collinson, 2014; Taylor 2014), to the point where scholars argue that in order to achieve better leadership and leadership development outcomes more attention needs to be focussed on followership and followership development. Another way this might be construed is: Train followers to be better and, consequently, leaders can/will succeed. Obviously, the scholarly intention is far more complex than such a simplistic linear reading. The prescient scholarly view is largely founded on the idea that leader-follower relations work in both directions of the binary, that is, the leader and the follower each have the capacity to affect and be affected by the other. Whereas, under heroic leadership, the behaviour of the leader was the primary consideration.

However, what must be remembered is that development programs have a manager 'owner' and that owner has both a managerial budget to spend on development and a managerial 'worldview' agenda. Might it be possible that harried VUCA world manager/leaders charged with responsibility for development might take a less complex view than scholars? Might it be possible that followership development could be construed by such manager/leaders as: Train followers to be better and, consequently, leaders – that is, *me* – can/will succeed? In the case of Alistair Mant's 'raiders' in Chapter 1, the answer is likely to be a resounding 'yes'.

In this chapter I will examine the dualism associated with this leader-follower perspective and demonstrate how an increased focus on creative approaches – working in concert with the prevailing mainstream scientific perspective, that is, not to replace it – can open-up promising new avenues to relational leadership knowledge.

Recasting the language of leadership

As management scholar Mark Dibben and his colleagues observe, in much of the dominant social science literature, the focus of psychology is primarily on an individual leader upon which leadership is accomplished and to which organisational work is reducible (Dibben et al., 2017, p. 176). What follows is the establishment of a leader-follower binary, as described above.

Underpinning these shifts in the leadership field is an underlying assumption that leaders and followers jointly affect leadership. Such an assumption confines attention to the leader-

follower interface. The focus remains on how terms such as leader and follower determine a relation with little attention to how a relation determines its terms. While such ideas of leadership permit connection of the leader-and-the-led as inter-subjective and 'relationship based', they are 'clear cut' individuals or groups (Whitehead 1929/1978), each capable of existing separately in their own right and each determining their own relations. Essentially, they are concrete separate groups each determining their own relations. The focus on scientific facts and absence of the balance espoused by Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Hatch et al. (2006) and Mintzberg (2005) results in a 'tautology' or 'logical fallacy' in that it holds well only because leadership is read into the content of the process which actually conditions it (Dibben et al., 2017). In short, the dominant social science literature in the field does little more than establish a series of relations between individuals or groups and neglects to show how such relations determine these terms. This is precisely where I contend the aesthetic, sensory contribution of a creative practice experience – the inductive visioning of art and iterative, experimental venturing of craft (Mintzberg, 2005) – has the potential to rebalance leadership discourse and, in turn, possible outcomes in workplace practice.

But, might something be lying in the way of experience?

Towards the end of their summary of leadership studies, Denis, Langley and Sergi (2012) cite Martin Wood's (2005) reconceptualised view of leadership, which challenges the leader-centred perspective, but appear not to expand on his contribution as they do with other scholars – perhaps as a result of the 'logical fallacy' that Wood describes. Or might this simply be a case of a definitional divide or impasse regarding the meaning of leadership as a field of research?

The position of process theory management scholars such as Martin Wood (2005; 2018), Patrick Dawson (2014) and Mark Dibben et al. (2017) is consistent with the focus on the importance of 'relations' by a much larger group of traditional leadership and organisation scholars such as Denis, Langley & Sergi (2012); Rosenhead, Francob, Grint & Friedland (2019); Heifetz & Linsky (2017); Ropo & Salovaara (2019); Uhl-Bien & Arena (2018); Chatwani (2018); Jones (2017); Tourish & Tourish, (2010); Ladkin & Spiller (2013); Fleming, Millar & Culpin (2018); Collinson (2014); Taylor (2014); Cunliffe (2009); Ropo (2005); Uhl-Bien & Ospina (2012); Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien (2012); Cunliffe (2009); Chaleff (2009); and Uhl Bien (2006). However, unlike the former smaller group of scholars, the focus of the latter larger group is more directly targeted to a belief in cognitive processes of social construction. These include contingency

perspective; social exchange theory or leader-member exchange (LMX) Theory; Role Theory; Framing – everyday talk and interaction where subordinates can meet a leader’s attempts to frame a situation – accept or reject – and where talk is coded in order to assert control, acquiesce, request control or neutralise control in a form of ‘organised’ discourse analysis (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Fairhurst 2004). I contend that, together with valuable insights into ‘affects and refrains’, in *The Red Ship on the Horizon* study described in Chapter 5, there was also evidence of a similar form of framing.

In contrast, however, the former scholars focus on process philosophy in which cognitive functions of social construction become diminished due to the contention that experience is primary to consciousness. In other words, discursive construction comes from conscious analysis not from direct contact with experience through our bodies. Consequently, framing creates an ‘intellectual strait jacket’ by mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself (Dibben et al., 2017, p. 178), thereby limiting the ability for change to occur.

Frozen

‘Change [...] requires creating a new system, which in turn always demands leadership’, according to Harvard Business School professor and leading organisational change expert, John Kotter (1995). Indeed, Kotter believes leadership is so important that organisations have too much change *management* and not enough change *leadership* as he argues: ‘successful transformation is 70 per cent to 90 per cent leadership and only 10 to 30 per cent management’ (Kotter, 1996, p. 26).

But if Mark Dibben and his fellow process theory management scholars are correct that mainstream discourse, and hence conventional understanding about leadership, is constrained by *mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself*, then the 70-90 per cent of leadership that is so essential for successful transformational change programs in organisations might be based on false premises. If so, then it would appear we have a serious problem that would benefit from an examination through an alternative lens. This is why I argue in this PhD for a creative-critical experimental approach to leadership that permits a balance of art and craft to work with science in organisational leadership discourse, education and practice. I contend that the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.* is a scriptology that can add value to the field of knowledge about leadership. In a similar stream concerned with theatre-

based research, US organisational aesthetics scholar Steven S. Taylor has produced a body of work (Taylor 2003; 2008; 2014; 2018; Taylor & Hansen, 2005; Ladkin & Taylor, 2010) based initially on his training as an actor and a play that he created and performed at the 2002 Academy of Management all-academy symposium in Denver, Colorado titled: *Ties That Bind*. Taylor explains:

My hope was that it would provide the start of a conversation about the violence that academics regularly do to each other in the name of academic discourse and perhaps even be the start of the end of that violence (Taylor, 2008, p. 398).

Here, I make a clear link to Chapter 4 regarding the creative writing peak body AAWP. In that chapter I argued: *'The point is, however, 'organisations' play a significant role in a large part of most of our lives. The university, TAFE and community sectors being well-served by AAWP are all organisations'*. Throughout this PhD I have presented organisational stories about lies, cheating, fraud, deception, cover-ups, bullying, suicide and, now 'violence' in universities, an ongoing phenomenon highlighted by organisational scholars Michal Zawadzki and Tommy Jensen (2020). Perhaps the inventory of affective *shimmers* to which Seigworth and Gregg (2010) refer should be expanded to include an inventory of affective *shudders*.

I will return again to Steven Taylor, particularly in relation to his work with theatre-based interventions in organisations and his analogy between functions of theatre in 'unfreezing' and the three-step organisational change model. But, first a brief explanation of the conventional business approach to 'organisational change'.

The widely accepted view of organisational change management theory is that change operates in either three steps (Lewin, 1951) or eight steps (Kotter, 1996) which essentially can be boiled down to four basic steps which I have illustrated in my Figure 20:

(1) we start with a frozen-solid present state, or status quo, that for change to occur (2) needs to be unfrozen, prior to (3) an interim period of disruption and movement until the desired new state is reached and then (4) a refreezing must occur to establish and embed the new status quo (Lewin, 1951; Schein, 1992; Kotter, 1996).

The '4 Step' Change Model

(based on Lewin, 1958; Schein, 1992; Kotter, 1996)

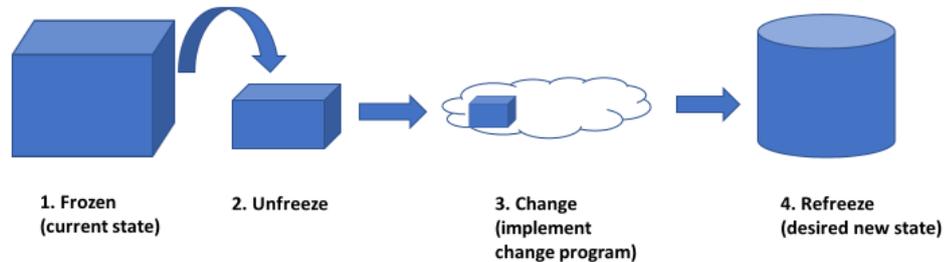


Figure 20 The '4 Step' Change Model

In 2016, a chilling critique of Kotter's work was published by UK organisational change scholar Mark Hughes:

At the very least we need to debate the current pitiful state of understanding leadership and organisational change [...] rather than continuing to cite Kotter's flawed analysis (Hughes, 2016, p. 458).

Hughes explained his reasoning citing Kotter's 2012 works including an updated reprint of *Leading Change* and Kotter's Harvard Business Review article celebrating the capacity for innovative companies to 'accelerate':

Kotter's belief that unprecedented change was occurring, yet that *Leading Change* was now more relevant than when first published in 1996, fuelled the writing of this paper. It was as if the 2008 global financial recession never really happened. As if a leadership thought leader was announcing in 2012 – It's business as usual! (Ibid., p. 463).

The purpose in this PhD is not to conduct a critique of organisational change management. However, it is important to the arguments in the thesis for four main reasons:

Firstly, John Kotter's work is globally influential, in particular *Leading Change* (1996) which contains the eight-step change process and according to Hughes has received: 'Glowing senior executive endorsements and its inclusion in TIME's (2014) 25 most influential business

management books highlight its continuing practitioner appeal' (Ibid., p. 449) and is 'by far the most cited book about leadership and organisational change' (Ibid., p. 464).

Secondly, in the current VUCA world, the 'business as usual!' attitude of powerful influential figures highlights the complacency and lack of authentic engagement with the real challenges being faced by people in organisations, despite the proliferation of toxic organisational stories discussed earlier. An argument for atmosphere attunement through paying attention to ordinary affects is one way to help people to navigate these treacherous waters.

Thirdly, in his account of Edgar Schein's 1992 cognitive redefinition of the organisational change model, Steven Taylor makes a theatre-based connection in his 'Functions of theatrical performance in unfreezing' (Taylor, 2008, p. 400).

Finally, the title of Hughes' paper, *Leading Changes: Why Transformation Explanations Fail* (2016) is relevant. Despite being provocatively critical of Kotter, Hughes' explanation for the title connects directly with Heraclitus' river metaphor in Chapter 2:

the play on words within the title of this paper acknowledges that accounts of leading inevitably change, informed by the people writing about change changing, informed by thinking changing and informed by contexts in which leadership takes place changing (Hughes, 2016, p. 464).

Furthermore, his reference to process theory management scholar Patrick Dawson (2014) supports the arguments advanced in earlier chapters of this PhD regarding temporality, ceaseless processual change and the non-linear, multiple intersecting planes that disrupt conventional thinking:

Dawson (2014) revisited Tsoukas and Chia's (2002) notion that organisations consist of processes of becoming with verbs such as organizing and strategizing capturing fluid processes of changing organisations. He highlighted the considerable traction that now exists between theories explaining change either as a series of marked episodes (steps) or as an ongoing ceaseless process. Engaging with process thinking explanations of leading change disrupts the sequentialism and linearity which Kotter's eight steps encourage (Ibid., p. 460).

In the two short reflections below, I reflect on the direct use and influence of Kotter's work at a 2011 public sector leadership conference and in an earlier corporate project team development session in 2009.



Reflections
Reflexionen

From Management ... To Leadership! [3]

'Successful transformation is 70 – 90% leadership and only 10 – 30% management ...'

- John Kotter (1996)



Our Iceberg is Melting

In 2009, my boss Tonia decided that she and I should attend a one-day change management seminar, together with five members of the small national project team I led as Director, People and Place Transformation (PPT), and members of another major project in her portfolio. The seminar was based specifically on a book by John Kotter titled, *'Our Iceberg is Melting: Changing and Succeeding Under Any Conditions'* (Kotter and Rathgeber, 2006). Kotter is described in the book's 'blurb' as 'the leadership and change guru at Harvard Business School' and his German co-author, Holger Rathgeber, as 'the modern global manager'. The book is presented as a children's fable about a penguin colony in Antarctica who have lived happily together for many years until one curious penguin realises their home is threatened by a devastating crisis. But, no-one in the colony listens to him. Until John Kotter's 'Eight Steps' to organisational change comes to the rescue.

Fables can be powerful because they take serious, confusing, and threatening subjects and make them clear and approachable. Fables can be memorable, unlike so much of the information that bombards us today and is forgotten tomorrow. They can stimulate thought, teach important lessons, and motivate anyone – young or old – to use those lessons. In our modern, high tech world, we can easily forget this simple yet profound truth (Ibid., p. 4).

It is a nice, well-meaning story and it was an entertaining seminar, despite the marketing 'schtick' that suffocated the central message. Despite our team's amusement and shared cynicism, throughout the intense demands of the PPT project, this little fable helped to provide a safe language for our team, especially when it came to change resistant penguins named 'No No'. It is a fact that 'fables' are not always readily memorable and can fade from view too. Strangely, it has only occurred to me, towards the end stages of writing this PhD thesis, that the experience of the 'iceberg' fable quite possibly has influenced my decision to write plays set in an organisational context, perhaps in 'the urgent need to communicate and the still more urgent need not to be found' (Winnicott, 1963, p. 186).



The twisting tides of Taylorism

Frederick Winslow Taylor (1856–1915) is widely considered to be the father of scientific management (Copley, 1923; Drucker, 1974). An American mechanical engineer, Taylor became one of the first management consultants through his meticulous study of industrial processes with the resolute aim of improving industrial efficiency. His famous book *The Principles of Scientific Management* (Taylor, 1911) was regarded as one of the most influential management books of the 20th Century (Bedeian and Wren, 2001). 'Taylorism', as it became known, held that a "one best way" to do work could be found through fastidious analysis of work, most famously through Taylor's stopwatch time study. In short, through his time studies, Taylor believed that it was possible to know, categorically, the one best way to work. This was later combined with the motion study methods developed by Lillian Gilbreth, a pioneering 'first woman' (Graham, 1994, p. 623) in both industrial engineering and psychology and her industrial engineer husband Frank (whose introduction in this order might be considered *unusual* by some people) which morphed into the field of time and motion study. Whereas

Taylor was concerned primarily with reducing process times for a *profit* motive the Gilbreths were more concerned with reducing motions involved in work in the interests of workers' *welfare*.

The combined work of Taylor and the Gilbreths was influential in transforming many industries including motor vehicle manufacturing led by Henry Ford, the founder of the Ford Motor Company and chief developer of the assembly line technique of mass production. In 'Fordism', mass production is also known as flow production or continuous production and relates to constant flow.

So, why is this relevant to my story in this PhD? According to Steven S. Taylor:

artistic forms are for opening up many possibilities rather than forcing a specific outcome. Theatrical performance offers us a key for opening a door to organisational change, but we don't know where that door leads us (Taylor, 2008, p. 405).

'We don't know?' 'Many possibilities?' Frederick W. Taylor would turn in his grave!

'Tyloring' a conversation

Let us imagine, for a moment, how a conversation between Frederick W. Taylor and Steven S. Taylor might go in my attempt at '*Tyloring' a Conversation*:

STEVEN: Breaking something down into its component parts, analytically dissecting the meaning of each part, and then summing up those meanings into a meaning of the whole is not enough for complete human knowledge and meaning (Ibid., p. 399).

FREDERICK: Yes, it is. We *know* through induction, deduction, logic, reason. That's science.

STEVEN: But with an artistic form, you apprehend it as a whole and take your own subjective meaning ...

FREDERICK: That's not science. You can't measure it.

STEVEN: ... your own 'felt meaning' (Courtney, 1995) ...

FREDERICK: I can measure felt.

STEVEN: ... your own tacit embodied knowing of direct sensory experience (Taylor, 2008, p. 400).

FREDERICK: What grade of felt is it?

STEVEN: With artistic forms, such as theatre, conscious critical gradings or filters are by-passed ...

FREDERICK: Natural fibre or synthetic?

STEVEN: ... knowledge and meaning is filtered to us naturally through our bodily senses, emerging awakenings bleed into us through tiny fissures as we walk in the time of the theatrical event.

FREDERICK: Time? You're kidnapping my theories. That's abduction!

STEVEN: At least we're agreed on one thing.

Steven S. Taylor not only appropriates the work of Canadian drama and education scholar Richard Courtney (1995) in regard to 'felt meaning', but he also balances this by engaging with Edgar Schein's organisational change three-step model of unfreezing, changing and refreezing. Taylor takes Schein's requirements for unfreezing to occur, namely (1) enough 'disconfirming data' so people see there is problem; (2) enough 'anxiety' so people are motivated to solve it and (3) enough 'psychological safety' to be open to change, then he applies it to his 'Functions of theatrical performance in unfreezing' (see Figure 21) (Taylor, 2008, p. 400).

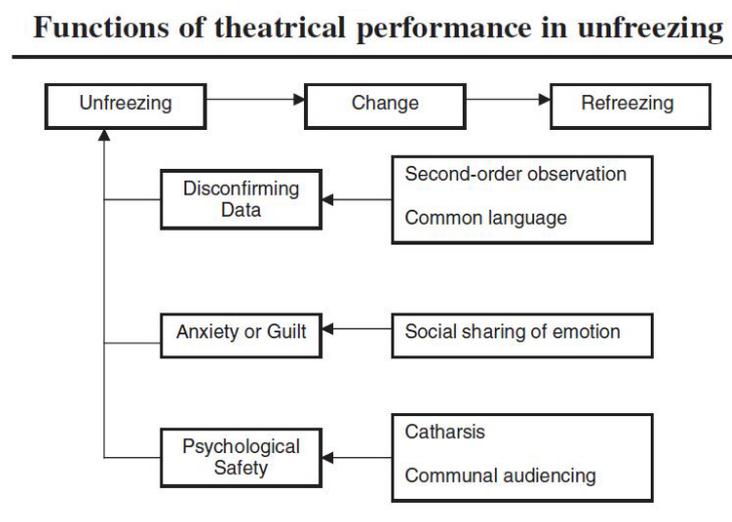


Figure 21 Functions of theatrical performance in unfreezing (Taylor, 2008)

Following the performance of Taylor's play, *Ties That Bind*, at the Academy of Management (AoM) conference in 2002, an audience email survey was conducted. Taylor addresses the audience responses with reference to Figure 21. The purpose for this PhD in considering Taylor's analysis of audience responses is not to critique *Ties That Bind*. However, I am using it to highlight how elements of his work connect to my work in this thesis regarding, what Taylor describes as, the capacity for theatre-based creative practice to create unfreezing in an organisational context. For example, the 'second-order observation' where a reader/audience connects and sees some form of truth, for them, is clear in the O'Callaghan review of *The Myth of Themanus* in Chapter 5 of this thesis, in the context of her work as a palliative care music therapist (O'Callaghan, 2016). In 'common language', the use of metaphors in the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript with inanimate objects such as the mirror, the revolving door and Gino's skipper's cap, like Taylor's 'old school tie' nepotism necktie in *Ties That Bind*, provides a language for the reader/audience to discuss organisational frustrations as the manager who perennially 'looks into it' (the mirror) but fails to decisively act or the rotating merry-go-round of ambitious executives (the revolving door) or washed-up leadership (the skipper's cap). In social sharing of emotion, scenes such as *Okie Dokie? Day* and the cast walking the tightrope above the heads of the audience in *Work. Life. Balance.* allows the reader/audience to experience a sense of guilt or anxiety about inclusion, exclusion, diversity and justice in organisational life. Finally, catharsis and communal audiencing, for one audience member of Taylor's *Ties That Bind*, 'The play is important as a consciousness-raising device' (Taylor, 2008, p. 402). Similarly, in her review of *The Myth of Themanus*, O'Callaghan observes that it 'reinforces that leadership is a privilege with serious consequences for the lives of others and the welfare of organisations' and argues that it 'compels us to challenge non-empowering work settings' (O'Callaghan, 2016).

Breakers

There are two final points to make about Taylor's findings that are important in the context of the arguments in this PhD. Firstly, *audience and assumptions*. Taylor states: 'For *Ties That Bind*, there were approximately 80 people in the audience, out of a possible 6,033 who were attending the Academy of Management meetings' (Taylor, 2008, p. 404). According to Taylor, his audience had 'no unfreezing to do. They were people who were already reflecting on their

practice and were anxious not to be reproducing the dynamics presented in the play' (Ibid.). Taylor analyses audience member responses such as:

Of course, the real culprits were probably not present. It [the play] should have been part of the President's Luncheon (Ibid.).

Then, he argues that had such attendance by 'the culprits' occurred, 'a much greater effect' was possible (Ibid.). This is one point where *Work. Life. Balance.* differs. Whereas *Ties That Bind* was like 'preaching to the choir' (Ibid.), the creation of *Work. Life. Balance.* is trying to resist or delay judgement of others and allow space for the reader/audience to experience the play in their own way. In Chapter 5 of this PhD, a Barbara Czarniawska study was introduced relating to 'accidental organisational theorist' Bruno Latour and his sociological Actor-Network Theory (ANT) (Czarniawska, 2017, p. 74). In her study, Czarniawska adopts the following precepts of Latour:

- (1) Use the same terms to explain truths and lies, failures and successes, trials and errors—in other words, *render the method judgment free.*

- (2) *Simultaneously study the emergence and conduct of both humans and non-human actants.* (This approach requires that greater attention be directed toward things and machines.)

- (3) Avoid [*binaries*] any a priori declarations concerning the differences between Westerners and non-Westerners, primitive and modern societies, rationality and irrationality, identity (sameness) and alterity (difference) (Ibid., pp. 75-76) [my emphasis].

I will return to Czarniawska's research in Chapter 7. However, in a similar vein to Latour's precepts, what has emerged through the creative-critical incubation process of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript is an attempt to avoid the standard binary bind where President's Luncheon attendees are 'the culprits' and we, the judge and jury, have no reflective learning or 'unfreezing' to do. It seems to me that this is a comfortable group-think binary trap that confines us in our trenches and is holding us back. At times, during the creation of *Work. Life. Balance.*, this has been a tense, challenging internal struggle, especially as structural conventions in plays/scriptwriting traditionally call for rising action around conflict between the protagonist and their antagonist. After all, there must be a hook or dramatic compass to

engage the audience 'so the story can find its way home' (Waldeback & Batty, 2012, p. 30). Without it, the work risks being perceived as 'art for art's sake' (Rhodes, 2018). In easing the tension, what emerged through the creative practice research process is a question I will pose now, and return to in Chapter 7: Can binary and non-binary perspectives co-exist?

As an experienced playwright and actor, Steven Taylor would have previously felt this tension. In 2018, Taylor and management scholar Elena Antonacopoulou edited a new book titled *Sensuous Learning for Practical Judgement in Professional Practice*. In their introduction, Taylor and Antonacopoulou begin by citing the British House of Lords major report *In Professions We Trust* which 'highlights the eroding trust in professions and professionals (bankers, doctors, lawyers) [...] [which] cannot be addressed through more regulation using codes of ethical conduct or indeed calls for moral action to underpin professional practice' (Taylor & Antonacopoulou, 2018, p. 1). The tenor of this introduction marries closely with the 'splinter in my eye' that drove the undertaking of this PhD in July 2016, as detailed in the Introduction, albeit in an Australian context of Royal Commissions that eventuated in 2017-20. It is also detailed in the *Work. Life. Balance*. playscript in Act 2 Scenes 1, 2 and 3 regarding Regional Commander KG's launch of the new Values, Ethics and Conduct policy program. What began as a creative-critical study of 'authentic' leadership was precisely why those scenes opened the action in the fictional federal agency 'FIBS' to evoke the sense of an organisational façade. Taylor and Antonacopoulou assert:

that there is an urgent need to explicate the conditions professional practice itself may create, that permits malpractice to co-exist, almost as an inseparable part of everyday practice. In this Volume, we show how *Sensuous Learning* can address this challenge in the way Art-based methods can foster reflexivity in everyday professional practice (Ibid., pp. 1-2).

Once again, this marries with my claim in Chapter 4 that, working together with (1) ethical and moral actions (2) embedded in relational understanding and (3) enacted through self- and critical-reflexivity, creative practice can be 'The Fourth Thread' in Ann Cunliffe's *The Philosopher Leader* (Conroy & Batty, 2019, p. 9; Cunliffe, 2009). Clearly, I concur with Taylor and Antonacopoulou in recognizing that there is 'an epistemological difference between sensuous, embodied knowing and logical, cognitive knowing' (Taylor & Antonacopoulou, 2018, p. 4). Where this PhD differs from Taylor and Antonacopoulou and colleagues in their field, who have joined forces to form their own 'Art as Activism' network (The Art of Management

and Organisation), is in relation to the question they are seeking to address which they consider in relation to neuroscience:

Making or audiencing art may well inherently produce learning in the neuroscientific sense of physical changes in our neuro-networks, but our question is how does one focus that learning into the development of character and conscience in such a way that would improve professional judgement? (Taylor & Antonacopoulou, 2018, p. 4).

While the forming of the Art as Activism network is a positive and promising initiative it comes with risks in terms of the major impact it desires, as detailed in its charter:

to support personal and professional development as well as, wider organisational and institutional changes [...] [with] an agenda that makes a difference in addressing this challenge of cultivating character and conscience in professional practices (Ibid.).

High among the risks is one identified by Taylor in 2008 of 'preaching to the [converted] choir' while the equivalent of the President's Luncheon continues unperturbed or, as John Kotter might exhort, 'Accelerating!' in the manner of business-as-usual (Hughes, 2016). In other words, the risk is to play into the divisive agenda of 'ruling power' if the new activist body reinforces division, such that the entrenched view on both sides of the binary is that 'change' is only required by *them* not *us*. Of equal concern, on the part of Taylor and Antonacopoulou, is their assumption that 'professional practice, itself' is *the cause* of malpractice, eroded trust and the (un)professional judgement they seek to fix through audiencing art. Such an assumption is akin to blaming 'the organisation' for criminal fraudulent behaviour without prioritising the focus onto who or what comprises 'professional practice' or 'the organisation'.

The second point about Taylor's findings relates to *methodology and scriptology* (Rhodes, 2018). Steven Taylor has made a valuable contribution to the use of theatre-based approaches in organisations and this will be examined further in Chapter 7. However, in the context of the unfreeze-change-refreeze organisational change model, despite insights gained by exploring the Taylor approach to theatre in the paragraphs above related to change management, this PhD holds grave concerns about organisational approaches that view human beings, or rather, 'being human' as something that can be managed, through scientific *and/or* artistic methods, in order to unfreeze or change their ways. In this PhD, I argue that this is akin to luring-in a fellow human being to read or engage with the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.* so that I can 'develop your character and conscience'.

On both points, this PhD argues that we may as well be asking for 'directions to Dublin'.

Adding to the sense that we are starting in the wrong place, in her valuable 2017 study of Bruno Latour and Niklas Luhmann cited above, Barbara Czarniawska, a leading scholar in her field, makes an intriguing claim:

Management and organisation studies are **not** about human nature, but about certain ways of life, and, more specifically, about certain ways of work (Czarniawska, 2017, p. 75) [my emphasis].

The question I ask in this PhD is **why not?**

Must there always be a period between words in *Work. Life. Balance.*?

Surfing the net

If there are few connections between F. W. Taylor and S. S. Taylor other than namesakes walking in the event of time, perhaps we can do better with the Gilbreths and Henry Ford. In 'Fordism', mass production is also known as flow production or continuous production and relates to constant flow. Despite Ford's factory setting, here we at least begin to see echoes of the language encountered in Chapter 3 related to process theory in the natural world. Contrary to conventional organisational change theory (see Figure 20 above), in process philosophy human lives cannot be reduced to things first being frozen/stable, then they change (unfreeze), then they are stable again (re-freeze). Rather, life is a processual series of dynamic acts of experience and that 'creative novelty' in terms of what is made of such experiences is the very essence of the universe (Whitehead 1929/1978).

By resisting the intellectual strait jacket through not mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself, process philosophy closes the binary gap that underpins management as social science of quality-quantity, man-nature, mind-matter, leader-follower, capital-labour, employer-employee, management-staff, employers-unions, AoM President's Luncheon culprits-unfrozen reflective choir; in short, between the power relations of 'them-and-us' in organisational life. This PhD seeks to resist the intellectual straight jacket.



Reflections

Reflections

Cold calling

As detailed earlier, I am building upon my work in the Executive Master of Arts (EMA) at The University of Melbourne in 2012-13, where I produced *The Myth of Themanus – 21st century leadership in action*. Further to points made in Chapter 5, the play focused on toxic organisational tensions, where a mythical ambitious new manager, Themanus, has his plans derailed by a lowly subordinate, Mischievous, who despite having little formal organisational power or authority, is able to employ his significant informal authority as a staff opinion leader to reject and undermine the control of his boss, Themanus. In 2014, I made the decision to leave Customs as the pendulum of government policy between Customs facilitation and control (enforcement) swung forcefully in the direction of the latter, largely due to the ‘Stop the Boats’ political agenda of the Abbott Government, which commenced after Liberal-National coalition success at the 2014 Federal election. In July 2015, the new Australian Border Force was formed following a merger of Customs and Immigration departments. John Kotter might argue that this was the start of my ‘unfreezing’, but I would like to think that I had been a proudly uncertain, ‘messy puddle’ for years prior.

After leaving Customs, I wondered what I could do with my play. I scoured the internet searching for scholars with an interest in this hybrid field of study. Unfortunately, my Masters research had not extended to the work of American playwright, scholar and actor Steven S. Taylor. I sent dozens of ‘cold call’ emails to scholars in Australia and globally, all but two of which went unanswered. One response was from an economics professor at the Australian National University in Canberra who expressed intrigue about my creative-critical work and sought to learn more. We spoke, we emailed, he made enquiries but, ultimately, he explained that his College ‘bolted the door shut’ on work of this nature. It was as unsurprising back then, as it is unsurprising now. Who, in their right economic rationalist mind, would be interested in the musings of ‘a venturing fool’, ‘a hopeful seeker’ or ‘a textual flâneur’ (Kociatkiewicz & Kostera, 2019). The other response was inspiring and, to this day, I remain eternally grateful

for it. The response changed little in terms of directly progressing my professional practice. The 'cold call' email was sent by a 'random Aussie' to a busy Canadian business school professor who had authored a paper titled: 'Daring to Care'. The very next day, Australia-time, a full-page comprehensive email was received from Professor Nancy Adler, with names of possible contacts, including Steven Taylor, and generous words of encouragement. If 'daring to care' can have an affective, embodied impact on a total stranger, then Nancy's email said it all.



Forks in the river

In writing *The Myth of Themanus*, my hope was to 'show not tell' an organisational story. Building upon that in this PhD, Chapter 3 detailed the ebb and flow through the purple segment of Hope's Colour Wheel of Creative Practice which forms part of the PhD contribution, as research through practice. This has required me to not only stand outside of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript to communicate it but also to stand within it in order to create it (Hope, 2016). Through this process, my practice has been opened to an appreciation of the 'ordinary affects' (Gherardi, 2017) which influence our organisational lives, on both sides of the 'them-and-us' binary. In the performative act of writing, my aim with *Themanus* in 2013 was to *show* the leader-follower binary dynamic but with a cognitive aim of steering towards a 'banish the binary' view – which appeared to me over twenty-five years of management and leadership practice to be curiously 'convenient' for both sides of the dichotomy. In contrast, creative practice research has enabled an embodied, affective, iterative and experimental process of becoming in which experience has been prioritised over consciousness. By holding contradictions, delaying judgement, allowing-in affects flowing from multi-layered planes, the social, ethical, political and economic framing forces behind leadership relations posed in the research question, whilst still relevant, have become less central in the creation of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript. In addition, the traditional focus on the theatrical *performance* of a playscript, has been overshadowed by creative-critical focus on a performative act of writing that attempts to evoke an effective response from the reader in the performative act of reading (Baker, 2018).

Returning to Mark Dibben and his process theory management colleagues (2017) and the point they make about framing. Dibben argues that scholars focus on discursively based social

construction, but conceive of leadership in terms of external relations between distinct and self-contained leaders and followers, an inter-subjective performance constructed through talk and text that helps us to create leadership through language and discourse (Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Collinson, 2014). In other words, discursive construction comes from conscious analysis, not from direct contact with experience whereby experience is primary to consciousness. Consequently, such social construction creates an 'intellectual strait jacket' by mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself (Dibben et al, 2017, p. 178). According to Dibben et al (2017), this 'introduces a great deal of confusion ... [as] leadership is not reducible to sentences and propositions. Leadership is more than leaders, managers and subordinates performing and enacting discourse' (Ibid.). It is possible that creative practice, including the *Themanus* script, could be accused of the same 'intellectual strait jacket'. However, in this PhD I argue that the 'not knowing', experimental making-doing-researching-reflecting nature of research through practice (Hope, 2016) results in an artefact that informs its own creation, thereby loosening, or removing altogether, any straight jacket constraining its creator. It is also argued that the intra-subjective experience evoked for people engaging with the playscript in a co-created momentary here-and-now, continuous series of '*becomings*' might enable the emergence of 'sites of dissonance, staging disturbances that open [and reorient] experience to new modes of expression' (Manning, 2016, p. 2). As Taylor and Hansen (2005) argue:

The use of artistic forms to look at aesthetic issues offers a medium that can capture and communicate the felt experience, the affect, and something of the tacit knowledge of the day-to-day, moment-to-moment reality of organisations. Not just the cleaned-up, instrumental concerns of 'the business', but the messy, unordered side as well ... a holistic way to get at the whole of the experience, something that the intellectualization and abstraction of traditional organisational research often seems to miss (Taylor & Hansen, 2005, p. 1224).

If an increasing number of scholars, across disciplines, such as Batty and Baker (2018), Batty and Taylor (2018), Rhodes (2018), Taylor (2018), Hope (2016), Batty (2016), Finley (2018), Sempert et al. (2017), Wood et al. (2018), Berbary (2011), Ladkin and Taylor (2010), Springborg (2010) and Taylor and Hansen (2005) are correct about the value of creative practice for understanding phenomena through a different lens, why does such 'confusion' as described by Dibben et al. (2017) remain? Could it be that the debate continues to be held back by a

definitional dispute? Could it be that Denis, Langley and Sergi (2012) cite Wood (2005), but do not appear to expand upon his contribution – and, by extension, that of Dibben et al. (2017) – precisely because they do not agree with his/their definition of ‘leadership’?

According to Whitehead (1929/1978), language is only a technical ‘approximation of general truths’ of experience, and therefore the only possible start for knowledge of leadership must be with experience. Dibben et al. (2017) argue that more recent leadership scholars see leadership as a centre of affective and cognitive experience, factors of activity and not ‘clean-cut connections produced by efforts put into them by clear cut individuals already given to lying in the way of experience’ (Whitehead 1929/1978; Dibben et al., 2017, p. 179). In contrast, according to Dibben et al (2017), leadership is a position or role taken by people possessing their own thoughts, emotions and purposes that are not reducible to sentences, propositions, titles and discourse. Furthermore, Dibben et al. (2017) challenge the adequacy of viewing relations in the ‘exchange-based terms’ of classic and conventional approaches and call for an investigation of leadership as an intra-subjective process ‘in the midst of things and (immanent) relations’ (Ibid.).

One major problem with this process philosophy perspective is that ‘leaders have no essence or substances beyond exhibiting those characteristics that cause us to see, feel, and think about them in a particular occasion of experience’ (Whitehead, 1967a, p176; Dibben et al., 2017, p. 179). Scholars in many organisation-related fields, including leadership, are likely to disagree with the authors’ definition, that is, what you say is leadership is not what I/we say is leadership. Questions remain regarding the claims of Mark Dibben and his colleagues. They challenge the concept of leadership by asserting that leaders have no objective essence or substance. In short, there is no such thing as a ‘leader’ or ‘follower’.

Dibben et al. (2017), Dawson (2014), like Deleuze and Guattari (1994), adopt the process philosophy perspective of Henri Bergson, a leading French philosopher who, in 1922, became engaged in an infamous bitter dispute with then rising physicist Albert Einstein about the physics of relativity (Canales, 2015). In short, Einstein claimed Bergson did not understand ‘relativity’ whereas Bergson claimed he accepted the *Theory of Relativity*, but that Einstein and supporters did not understand *him*. Ultimately, Einstein emerged triumphant in what was described as a victory for “rationality” against “intuition” according to Mexican-American science historian Jimena Canales (2005, p. 1168). Her study reveals that Bergson claims he was misunderstood stating: ‘All that I want to establish is simply this: once we admit the Theory of

Relativity as a physical theory, all is not finished. Philosophy, he modestly argued, still had a place' (Ibid., p. 1170). The context in which the dispute played-out is not only politically important but is important to this PhD, in terms of the institution at its centre, the International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation (CIC) of the League of Nations, a forerunner of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO). The dispute occurred shortly after the end of World War 1 and disagreements between Einstein and Bergson continued to plague the Commission until 1939 when the CIC was informally dissolved at the onset of World War 2. According to Canales, 'at stake in their debate was the status of philosophy *vis à vis* physics. It was, in essence, a controversy about who could speak for nature and about which of these two disciplines would have the last word' (Ibid., p. 1169).

It is not within the scope of this PhD to critique the Einstein versus Bergson dispute. However, this story is important for three reasons. Firstly, it marks a turning point in human affairs; a fork in the river where science established pre-eminence. Secondly, it emphasises the human need to conquer at the expense of connection. The Einstein-Bergson dispute, together with two devastating global wars on either side of it, speak directly to the Michael Leunig cartoon, *The Quitter*, that appears in the Introduction and adorned my Customs desk for a decade. Finally, in a similar vein, it highlights the demise of the International Commission for Intellectual Cooperation, 'an institution founded on the hope that if intellectuals could learn to cooperate then nations might follow' (Ibid., p. 1169).

In this PhD, I call for intellectual cooperation. I question whether or not Dibben and his colleagues are unwittingly establishing their own form of narrow lens approach, one that lacks the balance identified by Deleuze and Guattari (1994), Hatch et al. (2006) and Mintzberg (2005). Are they merely creating another binary either/or situation where it is either the process philosophical perspective that must prevail as truth in the field of organisational leadership studies or it is not?

In short, I argue that Dibben et al. (2017), by advocating an approach where process philosophy takes precedence over science and art in organisational leadership, simultaneously advance and inhibit the field.

As a consequence of this ontological, definitional dispute, I am daring to set aside the respective ontological positions. I am daring to allow in the novel creative insights of art and the dynamic iterative learning in the form of actions and experiments of craft (Mintzberg,

2005) in order to allow leaders to have both an objective essence and an affective becoming based on an intra-subjective occasion of experience. Rather than the narrow lens attack of alternative positions, I am seeking to create an environment 'in the midst of things and (immanent) relations' (Dibben et al., 2017), yet also acknowledge the objective presence of leadership and management in organisational life as millions of people understand it, including major scholars in the field (Czarniawska, 2018; Einola & Alvesson 2019; Rosenhead et al., 2019; Heifetz & Linsky, 2017; Ropo & Salovaara, 2019; Uhl-Bien & Arena, 2018; Ladkin & Spiller, 2013). With a view to by-passing the definitional disputes and binary language of leadership, I am experimenting with a world that can 'let it go', to reference a song in the popular children's animated movie, appropriately named, '*Frozen*' (Lee, 2013, p. 36), and that seeks to rediscover balance – to untangle some of the knots – through a variety of means, including through creative writing.

In short, I am asking: Is the term 'leadership' too large for us now?

In order to address any impasse by removing – or floating to one side for a moment – the definitional dispute so that the field of leadership research might have more room for experimentation and play, perhaps we simply need other terms.

Perhaps we need to move beyond the vast array of historical adjectives for leadership – such as heroic, distributed, transactional, inspirational, adaptive, situational, ethical, spiritual, transformational, visionary, relational and authentic. Whilst the use of such adjectives has enabled great progress in the field of leadership studies, might it have simultaneously resulted in us 'circling the same buoys'? Perhaps we are expecting too much from one central word: 'leadership'. In attempting to be both innovative and constructive, I propose the adoption of a portmanteau term such as '*leaderaft*' to be employed as an expression of our natural embodied human experience. *Leaderaft* represents our attention to affective internal relations as human beings, especially 'ordinary affects' (Gherardi, 2017a) that provides a balanced human attunement to our environment (atmospheres) as a collective whole, a balance between the verbal (logic), the visual (imagination) and the visceral (experience) (Mintzberg, 2005, p. 93) of being human within the broader leadership experience.

What might happen if we were to elevate leadership to an umbrella term with two portmanteau terms sitting below it which, when juxtaposed, helps to produce insights into the perceived success or failure of 'leadership'? I will experiment with this question through the

table in Figure 23 which features later in this chapter, but first I will consider why such an experiment might be useful.

Leadership

Consider the term ‘leadership’ in the Australian banking sector as one, simplistic example. In 2014, the salary of Ian Narev, CEO of the Commonwealth Bank of Australia, increased by about A\$300,000 to almost \$8.1 million – including a base rate, incentives and shares – according to the bank’s annual report (Pash, 2014). Measured against other major bank CEOs, Narev is paid less than contemporaries Mike Smith at ANZ Bank who received approximately A\$10.4 million, and Westpac Bank’s Gail Kelly with A\$9.2 million (Ibid.). One must assume that such remuneration is reward for what could only be described as successful leadership of their organisations. Yet the scandalous actions of banking officials over many years, exposed in the 2018 banking Royal Commission, have been widely condemned as an example of undeniable failings by the financial institutions’ leadership (Commonwealth of Australia, 2018a). So, despite the issue being far more complex than this brief summary, the reasonable question can be posed: Which form of leadership has been on display in the banking sector – successful leadership or failed leadership? And, if the latter, how do we explain the exorbitant executive salaries? How can we begin to know what was missing that resulted in so-called ‘failure’? Hence the question: Is the term ‘leadership’ too large for us now?

Even as I write these words about pay rates and executive bonuses in Australian dollar terms, the words are jarring; not because executives may or may not be overpaid, but because the words feel out of kilter with the words that have gone before. I can sense in my body that the scientific economic facts are part of a different discussion – a different language and logic – to the affective internal relations that are the central focus of the PhD. They are only one part of the more complete story of this phenomenon we call ‘leadership’.

In the spirit of ‘creative novelty’, in a nautical/maritime reference to a ‘ship’, perhaps we could dare to experiment, imagine and spare a moment for poetic ‘play’.

Consider a massive cruise liner, its sheer size, weight and complexity making it so difficult to change its course. At the rear of this ‘leader-ship’ is an almost impenetrable external façade known as the ‘*stern*’ which is visible, tangible and scientifically

constructed of high-grade steel. Without the technical mastery of science, this massive vessel could not exist.

Located within the stern is the *'aft'*, an entirely internal space not visible from the outside of the vessel, an intangible void, but an important space which houses a key piece of equipment – the rudder – a critically important instrument that helps to steer the course of the vessel (Chakraborty, 2017).

Perched high above the deck of this cumbersome cruise liner sits the life-raft. Not only is this *'raft'* a symbol of safety, security and the preservation of life in violent, unpredictable seas, it is also a smaller, more nimble and manoeuvrable craft that allows the traveller to reach places that are inaccessible to the larger ship.

Consider, then, an alternative maritime term for a life-raft. As a manager in Customs, I was introduced to this term by a Customs marine unit officer involved in the interception of asylum seekers trying to enter Australian shores on SIEVs. The alternative maritime term for a life-raft is a 'tender'. A *'tender'* is routinely deployed in the maritime industry to ferry passengers and crew from the larger ship to the shore when the sheer size of the larger vessel prevents it from connecting with its surrounding natural environment (Crouch, 2015).

When the sheer size of the larger vessel prevents it from connecting with its surrounding natural environment.

The rudder is engaged and the vessel may be turning, slowly, in poetic motion.

THE TURN

From stern ...

to aft ...

to raft ...

to tender.

The turn to *'leadcraft'* – from stern ... to tender. In the context of organisational power, who has it, why them and not others, Barbara Czarniawska appropriates Bruno Latour and proposes

to replace traditional political questions related to power over others with the simple question: 'Can we live together?' (Czarniawska, 2017, p. 77).

So, to support a response to Czarniawska's question, I am proposing a portmanteau term such as *'leaderstern'* to work in contrast with *'leaderaft'* under the mainstream umbrella term *'leadership'*. The term *leaderaft* would be based on a principle where 'others' are viewed, first and foremost, as a human being living in a society, *then* as an employee of an organisation. I am not arguing against the term 'leadership' but in support of it through the use of new terms that help us to access the less visible, intangible, unmeasurable, sensory, non-binary, embodied internal relations and 'ordinary affects' (Stewart, 2007) within the leadership experience of relational dynamics in organisations. Experience then consciousness; body then mind (Dibben et al., 2017).

Might this help to represent the balance sought by Mintzberg (2005) between science, art and craft; the shared learning between science, art and philosophy of Deleuze and Guattari (1994); the business, the art and the spiritual of Hatch et al. (2006); and the tenderness or 'daring to care' of Nancy Adler (2010)?

In her otherwise valuable study of Bruno Latour, Czarniawska's claim that 'Management and organisation studies are not about human nature, but about certain ways of life, and, more specifically, about certain ways of work' (Czarniawska, 2017, p. 75) appears to suffer from a mind-body dualism. It appears to undervalue Latour's high regard for our embodied human experience of life. As Bruno Latour himself argues:

to have a body is to learn to be affected, meaning effectuated, moved, put into motion by other entities, humans or non-humans. If you are not engaged in this learning you become insensitive, dumb, you 'drop dead' (2004, p. 205).

In 2008, as they revered the celebrated stories of Dodgy Don, it would appear that the CBA colleagues of whistle-blower Jeff Morris, were 'dropping dead' on the bowling green.

Addressing management learning, Mintzberg (2005) might have been reading directly from Alistair Mant's definition of 'raiders' when he argued that insensitive, mercenary organisational behaviour is partly a product of MBA programs that:

attract a disproportionate share of people with these characteristics – impatient, aggressive, self-serving – and then launch them on fast tracks to positions of influence

in society. Because the education is rooted in no industry or organisation, is anchored in no particular context, it encourages a style of management that is likewise impatient, aggressive, and self-serving, obsessed with being “on top” to manipulate the “bottom line,” “downsizing” to raise “shareholder value.” This, in other words, is a style of management devoid of leadership (Mintzberg, 2005, p. 92).

And there is the rub. Rather than being devoid of leadership, a viable argument against Mintzberg would conclude that reducing costs and increasing shareholder value is, in fact, a demonstration of exemplary leadership. Indeed, organisation executive reward systems appear to actively support this view of leadership, most prominently in the banking sector (Pash, 2014).

As the character DEE innocently surmises in Act 2, Scene 1 of *Work. Life. Balance.*:

Pay peanuts, you get monkeys.

As evidenced in recent Australian corporate scandals – a Royal Commission into Banking and Financial Services (2018), a Royal Commission into Child Sexual Abuse (2017), a Royal Commission into Aged Care Quality and Safety (2019) – some major organisations and industries appear to have lost a significant degree of their care, their balance, their morality, their respect, their sense of common humanity, their tenderness towards others.

Does this represent a failure of leadership in these highly successful, profitable, well-led organisations? Or might it, more specifically, be an absence of reflective focus on ‘leadercraft’ that has caused the leader-ship to become unbalanced and off-course?

In the same portmanteau stream as the invention of the term ‘precariat’ in labour relations and the neo-liberal casualization of the workforce (Standing, 2011), which has advanced the debate and created new possibilities for global labour markets, I argue that so, too, can ‘leadercraft’ help to create a tiny fissure or crack in the form of Erin Manning’s minor gesture, shining a light on new possibilities for organisational leadership. And one method with potential to assist this focus on affective, embodied experience is the creative-critical driving force that results in a creative work (Lee et al., 2015) such as *Work. Life. Balance.*

It is important to stress that any invented term is, arguably, just another form of intellectual shorthand. To avoid ‘circling the same buoys’ once again, the ‘intellectual strait jacket’ created by mistaking the framing of leadership for leadership itself equally applies to invented terms

such as 'leaderstern' and 'leaderaft', so care must be taken in their use. However, a degree of stabilising balance and harmony might be possible if we do not forget that they are only an invented 'fix' to help us to view leadership through a new lens, just as we 'fix' (order) the world with organisation chart titles as we see in the cast of characters introduction of *Work. Life. Balance.* and terms such as leader, follower, manager and employee. These terms help organisations – including human beings within them – to gain a necessary sense of order, governance, stability and control so they can safely survive the VUCA world and prosper, only to *forget* that we have done so (Woolgar, 1988) believing our 'fix' to be a one true source of reality; a reality that gives power to its 'owners'. If only those owners could delay the quick jump to representational cognitive thinking, unexpected benefits might flow as those same owners remain adaptive enough to explore the unknown, embracing uncertainty, complexity, vulnerability; finding a way to feel comfortable being uncomfortable.

Navigation

In their attempt to 'navigate uncharted territories', Ladkin and Taylor (2010) explore variations on the theme of leadership as art and highlight the value of 'sense-making' embodiment, leaders 'staying with their senses' longer to allow emergent data from their physical senses to inform their actions/responses rather than jumping to ideas of what is happening through habitual cognitive analysis. Leadership, like art, is 'experienced' by the processes through which they are created. To create the experience of containing and working with contradictions and paradox is central for both art and leadership to work with light and shadow, particularly the shadows of corporate scandals and unethical organisational behaviour. The nature of this PhD with Reflections and *The Work. Life. Balance.* playscript interwoven throughout the thesis gives a sense of the work of Silvia Gherardi. Gherardi employs case studies (2017a) and vignettes (2017b) such as Berlant's 'cruel optimism' to 'shed light on how practices may be sustained by competing forms of attachments that sometimes may enter into open conflict and negotiation and some other time may coexist along a multiplicity of intersecting and non-communicating planes' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 218).

As I reach the end of my PhD candidature, at times feeling vulnerable and tangled in knots, I remain mindful that what matters is not what happens to us but what each of us make of what happens to us (Dibben et al, 2017). By allowing the vagueness of affect to potentially provide 'a way of engaging with "experience" shorn of some of its humanistic garb' (Brown and Tucker,

2010, p. 232), new insights have emerged. As Gherardi observes: 'Paying attention and noticing ordinary affects means to devote an analytic attention to how affect in working practices creates an atmosphere in a workplace [...] [which] does not mean a search for rationalistic explanations of what escapes cognition [...] Rather it implies a search in noticing and writing in a [...] more-than-representationalism language' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 212; Lorimer, 2005, p. 84). For Lorimer (2005) this is to avoid dichotomist thinking, to escape the leader-follower binary bind that continues to be the basis of mainstream literature in the field and a trap into which I argue Mark Dibben and his colleagues have also succumbed. I contend that this is where research-led creative practice research, such as the 'scriptology' (Rhodes, 2018) in this PhD, can float the potential for new forms of leadership behaviour in organisations to emerge.

Rather than continuing to work in black-and-white binary ways, the turn to ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007) can 'circulate colour, vibrate, surround and envelope bodies and things that happen to hang together in what is seen as a practice' (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 218) and provides hope for viewing leadership differently. Similarly, and importantly, so too does Sophie Hope's 'Colour Wheel of Practice-Research' provide *hope* where the creation of *Work. Life. Balance.* has been both the object of the study, the method to research that object and the result of the process; where, embedded in its creation is a research process which emerged because of engagement with the practice itself (Hope, 2016, p. 83).



Reflections
Kofscopre

Someone else

In the late 1990s and early 2000s, whilst working as a manager at Melbourne Airport in a workforce comprising 350 staff on 20 teams, working shifts across 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, the uniformed hierarchical structure appeared to have a dehumanising, controlling effect on the potential of each individual person in the workforce. The environment I entered was not one of valued employees given autonomy to use their discretion, problem solve and

take personal responsibility for their actions. Rather, it was a controlling environment where the manager or superior ranking officer knows best and supervisor dependency on the part of staff was an entrenched cultural trait. Consequently, problems arising would automatically be deferred to a higher authority and those people directly experiencing the problem would be required to wait until said higher authority had the time or inclination to try to resolve the problem. This appeared to suit some staff because it always gave them 'someone else' to blame. It also suited some staff in higher authority because it kept subordinate people under control, in their so-called rightful place, and saved the higher authority from any 'surprises' resulting from subordinate staff making so-called dumb decisions. This was a black-and-white work environment that appeared to be searching for relief from itself, such were the frustrations for staff with endless 'problems' remaining unresolved. (The reference in *Work. Life. Balance.* to KG or The Mirror's 'I'll look into it' seeks to demonstrate the working dilemma of such an organisational model.)

By recruiting interested, frustrated staff into a change agenda, driven by staff and their respective team leaders, the culture slowly began to turn as people realised that they could make decisions, recommend courses of action, develop their own solutions and apply for funding to deliver those solutions via a relatively straightforward process of business case proposals. What followed was a tangible reduction in absenteeism indicating an improvement in morale, collegiality within and across shift teams and more open, trusting communication with management. What also followed for some staff was the dawning realisation that the welcome changes also resulted in people having to accept greater personal responsibility for their actions.

In regular one-on-one conversations with staff throughout subsequent months, the following comment was reported to me on several different occasions involving different staff members: 'Life here was so much easier when things were black and white and everything had to go through our direct supervisor for resolution. Now things are so grey.'

My response was consistently to ask: 'Which model is better for *you* in terms of your growth and development as an adult member of the organisation?' Without fail, the answer I received was always a preference for the so-called 'grey' model. In some cases, it was a slightly embarrassed, semi-reluctant acknowledgement that they know they are as capable as anyone to develop solutions to problems, but that the easier way was hard to give up.

In such cases, time was made for deep discussion and playful collaboration ensued until mutual agreement was reached. Rather than referring to the 'new' way of operating as dull, boring 'grey', unanimous agreement was reached to think of the 'new' way as '*working in the colour*'. The rationale was that it is the colourful, more challenging aspects of life – where being agile, adaptive and embracing our challenges adds colour to an otherwise monotonous day of processing international passengers. It is in these times that our greatest growth and learning about ourselves and our creative potential in the world occurs.

Sophie Hope and her Colour wheel of Creative Practice may have been pleased with us.



Some of the most difficult aspects of having an organisation chart-defined 'leadership' role in an organisation is trying to resist the temptation to 'play the manager'. It seems that is a requirement of 'the game', to pretend that you know best, even when you don't, to allow others to lay their expectations on you to 'be' the manager or leader, to fill the space with your own perspectives or insights and deny people the opportunity in terms of doing their own human thinking and feeling on important issues. In 'the game', you would be a fool if you allow people to make minor mistakes, to accept and carry the formal responsibility, yourself, for those well-meaning mistakes of others, to sit comfortably with uncertainty, to have empathy for the other, to show your own vulnerabilities, to reflect and learn from experience. One problem with 'the game' in organisations is that you never quite know which game you're in and 'whose side the river is on' (Churchill, 2000).



Reflections

Reflections

Will there be job losses?

In 2007-09, whilst working as the Director of National Payroll and Accounts (NPAC), a corporate enabler for the more than 5,000 full-time equivalent (FTE) Customs and Border Protection workforce, a new IT systems project commenced in Canberra to deliver increased payroll system automation via an SAP payroll system product. One of the aims of the SAP project was to significantly reduce the large number of manual processes being completed each day by the 52 payroll staff employed in NPAC. As Director NPAC, a key stakeholder in the project, I attended regular meetings to receive progress updates from the project team. Following each update, I conducted staff meetings to keep all payroll team members informed and engaged in the project, especially as it would have a major impact on their future. Staff were regularly encouraged to be actively involved in both personal career planning initiatives that had been specifically established for people and systems development with project technicians. This encouragement to have 'buy-in' was sincerely so people could understand and have active input into where they might fit-in with the operational change in terms of future payroll operations and their own careers. At several of these 'all staff' meetings, I would provide the project progress update and then open the floor for questions and answers to which I would give the most open and honest answers that I could in order to help people come to grips with change. That is, except for one particular question: 'Will there be job losses?'

My answer to staff was:

I'm not going to answer that. Not because I want to be evasive, but because I want you all to answer that question. This is not about 'management know better than staff'. I am sharing with you everything that I know. We currently complete a large number of manual payroll processes and the organisation has invested millions of dollars to automate half of those manual processes. I can tell you that decisions on our future

structure have not been made but what do *you* think might happen? Honestly. Each and every one of you is as capable as I am to answer that question, so let's open the discussion, to share and support each other through this change.



Parting of the seas

So often in the scholarly debate between people who support the more mainstream position of a binary perspective and those who insist that the world is best understood through a non-binary lens, two words that commonly appear are 'rather than'. For example, the phrase appears regularly for Dibben et al. (2017):

Leadership is a novel moment, a continuously renewed relational experience, *rather than* something we can essentialize (e.g., by suggesting that he or she is a leader);

We however view leadership as novel events that cause us to see, feel, and think in terms of movement *rather than* of something that we should define with desired concreteness (Dibben et.al., 2017, p. 181, *my emphasis*).

This seems strange to me. Surely a debate about binary versus non-binary is, itself, a binary debate. When reading academic literature across a range of fields, a feeling creeps over me that is not dissimilar to the senselessly inhibiting feeling I had throughout my public service career at Customs where you didn't have a choice – you either had to be on the side of management (a 'management team' player) or on the side of staff and the union (CPSU). There was no in-between. Yet a focus on the in-between is central to a relational, processual, emergent approach to understanding our human place in the world. Indeed, in writing *The Myth of Themanus* in 2013, my purpose was to highlight the limitations of binary 'them-and-us' thinking regarding employer-employee, management-staff, leader-follower etc. with a view to challenging and removing binary thinking from organisational life.

However, building on that in this creative practice research PhD, the experimentation, incubation and reflection on the creative process has shifted my position, not in terms of choosing one side over another in the binary debate, but in experimenting with a *not-knowing*

approach to knowledge through creative practice 'play' in a world that welcomes in both binary and non-binary approaches. Whilst the futile limitations that emerge through a socially constructed binary perspective might be averted through a non-binary approach, I can feel it in my bones that the existence of a binary is a necessary element of life. As humans we need something and someone to push against in order to grow. Alfred North Whitehead (1929/1978) captured the spirit of this with his assertion that the internal relations of embodied, subjective, lived experience is primary to consciousness and that humans move to meet experience. It is not what happens to us that matters most, but we what we make of what happens to us.

The good ship 'Lollypop'

My wife, Jane, and I were blessed to give birth to four children within a six-year period. Raising four children under the age of six, and a puppy, was a test of human endurance. Within what seems like a blink of an eye, precious babies and toddlers aged 0-6 years have instantly become adults aged 21-27 years. Ours has been a home that was once a house full of nappies, then a house full of school uniforms and sports clothes on the ironing pile; a house full of tears and joy, successes, failures and disappointments; a house full of love and hate, war and peace; a house full of comings and goings and unceasing 'taxi-then Uber-driving' to a vast array of, often simultaneous, events, then a house full of learner drivers; a house full of exam stress; a house full of friends then boyfriends and girlfriends.

It strikes me that, in parenting, it is the role of the parent to be pushed against, to experience rebellion by their children in order for both parties to grow. For the child, together with the physical changes to their bodies as they age, a growing independence is also experienced and, hopefully, a *post-conventional* level of moral development to enable self-chosen principles of justice and fairness (Nankervis et al., 2018; Kohlberg, 1981). In the context of organisational life, it is important to note that, due to a range of childhood personal circumstances often beyond our own control, some people remain at a *pre-conventional* level in terms of only following rules to avoid punishment; in other words, obedience for its own sake to avoid detrimental personal consequences. Others progress to the so-called *conventional* level in terms of acting in order to live-up to the expectations of others; in other words, they are greatly influenced by their superiors, colleagues and other significant people in the organisation (Nankervis et al., 2018).

For the parent, the growth experienced through parenting appears to be of a different nature. My sense of the experience of being a parent is a growing depth of love in the face of rebellion, an emerging capacity for empathy, forgiveness, guilt, selflessness, tenderness, care for the other beyond oneself, accepting vulnerability, embracing uncertainty; in other words, striving to find a way to be comfortable feeling uncomfortable. That quest continues like a white-water raft ride down the Kicking Horse river in the Canadian Rockies. However, from the lofty position of leadership and management, it is difficult not to view organisational life like a series of parent and child relationships. This is despite the absurdity of any leader being seduced into viewing themselves as an employee's 'parent', constantly doing the thinking for their dependent 'child' however seduced the latter might be by their charismatic leader. Sadly, in my experience, this is precisely how some managers/leaders view their roles. In a move that business school professor Amanda Sinclair describes as 'double seduction', while important senior people and staff believe that a leader has all the answers and could do no wrong in terms of ethical behaviour, the leader is also persuaded that he would be protected by the charmed circle that had formed around him (Sinclair, 2007, p. 10).

It must be stressed, quite obviously, that becoming a parent – in the true sense of the word, *becoming* – is merely one form of life experience that *may*, as distinct from will, contribute to a human being's development capacity for a growing depth of love in the face of rebellion; an emerging capacity for empathy, forgiveness, guilt, selflessness, tenderness, care for the other beyond oneself, accepting vulnerability, embracing uncertainty; in other words, striving to find a way to be comfortable feeling uncomfortable. Such capacities exist in parents and non-parents alike and can be found in a wide range of ways including loving partner relationships, love for pets, the nurturing of plants and trees, admiration and respect for the majesty of nature to name a few. However, through the beauty of creation, every single person in an organisation has experienced 'parenting' of some form in their lives – as either parent or the parented – and, for better or worse, has experienced a sense of the parent-child relationship.

Status games – high stakes on the high seas

Steven Taylor employs his experience in theatre as an actor to describe the exchanges in organisations in terms of 'status games'. Taylor describes status games as 'the micro dynamics of power relations' which are 'the ways in which we raise and lower our own and others' relative status as we interact' (Taylor, 2014, p. 244). Obviously, we do this in our day-to-day

conversations at work. But we also employ status games in the use of our bodies through eye contact, confident and direct or looking down and away, the space we consume when we stand such as towering over or hesitantly shrinking back, our facial expressions and positioning of our head which might be tilted or still or tossed back in amusement/shock, the strength, warmth, timidity or ascendancy of a handshake and so on. These are all examples of the 'ordinary affects' to which Stewart (2007) and Gherardi (2017a; 2017b) refer. Gherardi argues that we should pay greater attention to these often-unseen forces to affect and be affected in organisations.

The relevance of this to the creative practice research in this PhD, in particular the use of theatre via the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, is important. Reflecting on theatre, Keith Johnstone is a pioneer of British and Canadian improvisational theatre, and he argues that actors think about 'status' as something you *do* to perform your role (Johnstone, 1979). This is very distinct from viewing 'status' as something you *have* or *own*. By viewing characters in *Work. Life. Balance.* through the lens of ordinary affects, the existence and affective impact of status games being performed is brought into clear view. Examples of this include the posturing of KG (permanently standing); Wally's 'dress to impress' appearance, misuse of Taylor's name, direct eye contact when blatantly lying to staff; Fatima's progressively recoiling body, ultimately into a twisted ball of frustration; the large screen close-up images of facial expressions of Victor, Gino and Oscar; the swift, efficient gait of Penny; even the timing and choice of emojis employed by Jools via text message to Penny.

Taylor (2014) argues that playing status games at work stops us from connecting with each other, particularly in the 'leader-follower' dynamic. It can consist of a range of, sometimes completely unconscious behaviours including the follower acting in ways that raise the leader's status and lower their own status, while the leader raises their own status and lowers the status of the followers (Taylor, 2014). Alternatively, it can be the opposite extreme such as in servant leadership (Sipe & Frick, 2015; Patterson & Van Dierendonck, 2010; Greenleaf, 1977) where a leader engages in low status activities 'to show that they can relate to the people' (Taylor, 2014, p. 245). Taylor describes this as 'almost a cliché in American politics' claiming that:

it is not clear to me that any of us really want our leaders to lower their own status. Status matters and when push comes to shove I want my leader to have higher status than your leader (Ibid.).

My response to Taylor (2014) is *why*? Is idolising my leader's status over yours akin to my parent is better/more important than yours? Aside from the leader, who stands to benefit from my leader having the highest status? Followers endearing themselves to their leader by raising the leaders' status sounds a lot like our earlier reflections in this PhD about The Salesman. What is driving this concrete thinking about the leader-follower dichotomy which, to this day, is so common in the field? In Chapter 7, we will consider these issues from other perspectives. However, what does this say about them/us(?), the so-called 'followers'? Is organisational 'leadership' really reducible to this? Or, is this merely a cultural feature of the US that has proliferated around the globe? As we saw with the 2019 management lecture at an Australian university in Chapter 2, an effective manager/leader needs to *appear* to have empathy and be non-judgemental so that people will trust you and tell you everything.

But, then, I also agree with Steven Taylor when he asserts the value of theatre-based learning to provide an alternative perspective to the rational logic employed in conventional leadership and management theory, because: 'Status games are a barrier to opening your heart' (Ibid., p. 243). Taylor argues that rationality and emotionless decision-making is 'far from our own experience of what it is to be a physical, flesh, and blood human being filled with emotions' (Ibid., p. 251). However, that is where the alignment with this PhD ends. Taylor reflects on case studies of managers on his university MBA program. He uses them to demonstrate 'the essence of good leadership' citing examples of managers Ping and Frank who he claims are 'making leaderly choices about what to share and how to open their heart to others' because such behaviour 'normalises feelings of anxiety or unease and in ways that make the undiscussable discussable' (Ibid.). He describes 'leaderly choices' as acknowledging your own shadow, having strong feelings and letting others see them and expressing:

how much you love the group (but you really have to). Not so long ago I asked a group of MBA students what leadership was. One of them said "love". Nothing more nothing less (Ibid.).

Similarly, in Act 3 Scene 6 of *Work. Life. Balance.*, immediately prior to intermission, David Bowie and lead singer Gail Ann Dorsey, covering the Queen song *Under Pressure*, ask: 'Why can't we give love one more chance?'

However, in this PhD, I argue that these so-called 'leaderly choices' are a deception based on the flawed concept that it is all about *me*, the leader. If anything, the examples Taylor provides are *human choices* of a decent human being who is concerned with the question: How can we

live together?’ (Czarniawska, 2017). To emphasise the point about organisations, Taylor acclaims the ‘leaderly’ nature of showing strong feelings or emotions but does he consider what might happen to a so-called ‘follower’ who showed strong feelings or emotions at work? As we have seen in earlier chapters of this PhD with whistle-blower Jeff Morris, they would be criticised, ostracised and tagged as ‘too emotional’.

The key points to be made in relation to this PhD are firstly, that Taylor continues to propagate the myth of the ‘leader’ and their ‘leaderly actions’; and, secondly, that statements by Taylor such as: ‘The real content of opening your heart is the emotional honesty and sharing, not the words’ (Taylor, 2014, p. 249) can be vastly expanded upon through the contribution of this PhD. Taylor’s statement might ring true but how do we know? He employs the case study of Frank who lowered his guard and ‘opened his heart’ to staff claiming this to be a ‘leaderly choice’. However, Taylor then explains that ‘Frank *takes advantage* of the fact that everyone is feeling something and *he uses* those feelings to connect as human beings. Frank outs his humanity by being very human [...] moments like these are a *gift to the leader*’ (Ibid.) [my emphasis].

Once again, we see a managed approach with an instrumental purpose for opening your heart that is rejected by this PhD. This is the point in the PhD journey where it moves into *post-authenticity* and the research question changes to remove ‘authentic leadership’. I argue, with Gherardi, that paying attention to our affective, embodied, lived experience leads to new affects, ever-new beginnings, affects that relate not to the form of our experiences but, as philosopher Erin Manning argues, to the *forces* of form (Manning, 2016), never static or frozen, moving into and out of each moment in our complex, intra-subjective human lives. In my table at Figure 23, I use Taylor’s plea for us to ‘Open your heart to others as a leader’ to draw out the distinction I am making between the two portmanteau terms under the umbrella of ‘Leadership’: ‘Leaderstern’ and ‘Leaderaft’.

I admit this is an experimental approach, but is designed in good faith. In the spirit of this PhD’s call for balance and harmony between perspectives, I am attempting to employ a variety of perspectives in the development of Figure 23, including science, art and craft.

The Tree of Knowledge

The banks of the Yarra River, near Heidelberg, in Melbourne, Australia, was 'the studio' of an Australian art movement of the late 19th Century which became known as The Heidelberg School. Inspired by naturalist and impressionist ideas, artists such as Arthur Streeton, Walter Withers, Tom Roberts, Charles Conder and Frederick McCubbin sought to capture Australian life, the bush, the variations of light, both harsh and subtle, that typifies the landscape of the new nation, Australia (Burke, 2005). On that same Yarra River terrain, arts patrons Sunday and John Reed established at their Heidelberg farmlet, known as Heide, a refuge for artists to live whilst developing their craft. One young artist was Sidney Nolan whose Ned Kelly series of paintings emerged at Heide (Harding and Morgan, 2015). After the Reeds' deaths in 1981, the Heide Museum of Modern Art was established on their farmlet. In the front garden of the Reed's old cottage stands a sculpture of wood, iron, terracotta and synthetic polymer paint by German artist Alex Selenitsch (refer to Figure 22). The sculpture is titled The Tree of Knowledge and consists of a single trunk in the form of a large letter 'Y' which rises and expands in the formation of tree branches via a series of connected letters 'Y'.



Figure 22 The Tree of Knowledge Alex Selenitsch (1989)

I am daring to marry this artistic representation of knowledge with a scientific pursuit of knowledge through a common business approach in lean processes, root cause analysis and risk management in the form of the '5 Whys' model for dealing with complexity (King, 2019). Under the '5 Whys' model the question 'Why?' is asked in response to each answer provided to the 'Why?' question above it in the table with the aim of getting to the root cause or central issue thus avoiding short-term 'band-aid' solutions to complex problems. This process occurs in Figure 23 in descending order following a principle regarding 'others' to whom the leader is opening their heart (Taylor, 2014).

Furthermore, in Chapter 5 I considered a Reflection of the Work Health Safety and Wellbeing (WHSW) university students who visited a memorial site in Melbourne where three unsuspecting people were tragically killed when a wall at a building site collapsed on them. The University of Manchester Emeritus Professor of Psychology, James Reason, who developed the famous Swiss cheese model of accident causation, argues for managers to have 'chronic unease' about human error risks (Reason, 2016; Fruhen, Flin & McLeod, 2014) as distinct from a complacent organisational approach of believing that their management work is done after developing OHS policy and guidelines that protect the organisation from OHS legal claims.

Regarding Reason's 'chronic unease', I argue that there are parallels between his call for unease about latent risks and Gherardi's call for paying attention to the nascent, underlying ordinary effects of organisational life. Finally, economist Joseph Schumpeter gave us the term 'creative destruction' and in Chapter 5, Melbourne philosopher Jason Fox described 'creativity' and 'destruction' as two sides of the same coin. Consequently, Figure 23 has been given the title: *Leadership: Leaderstern and Leaderaft: Creative Convergence*. Despite being experimental, this is no trivial matter. As we were reminded in the Introduction by Mark Hughes, getting to the 'heart' of the leadership phenomenon is critically important in order 'to avoid repeating these leadership errors and the considerable damage they do to societies and economies' (Hughes, 2016, p. 465).

LEADERSHIP	
'Open your heart to others as a leader...'	
'LEADERSTERN'	'LEADERAFT'
<i>Principle:</i> An 'other' is an employee of an organisation first, then a human being living in a society.	<i>Principle:</i> An 'other' is a human being living in a society first and foremost, then an employee of an organisation.
Why open your heart to others? A: To create a physically embodied path for connection between employees.	Why open your heart to others? A: To create a physically embodied path for connection between human beings.
Why create a physically embodied path to connection between employees? A: To show respect and to validate employees, both leader and followers.	Why create a physically embodied path to connection between human beings? A: To show respect and to validate human beings.
Why show respect and validate employees? A: So they will feel valued, less vulnerable, treated equally and more motivated to contribute to the organisation.	Why show respect and validate human beings? A: So they will feel valued, less vulnerable, treated equally and more motivated to contribute to society.
Why should employees be more motivated to contribute to the organisation? A: So that the leader can achieve their individual goals and employees can learn and grow through their co-created involvement and participation.	Why should human beings be more motivated to contribute to society? A: So that society will achieve its collective aims and members can learn and grow through their co-created involvement and participation.
Why should the leader achieve their individual goals and employees learn and grow? A: So that the leader will succeed (be rewarded) and the organisation will be prosperously sustainable.	Why should society achieve its aims and members learn and grow? A: So that society will be prosperously sustainable.

Figure 23 – Leadership: Leaderstern and Leaderaft – Creative Convergence

This concept will be expanded upon through Figure 25 in Chapter 7, however, at this point in the thesis, the use of Figure 23 is to illustrate a point of difference between what some might consider to be *successful* leadership when others see the same organisational experience as *failed* leadership. For example, from the time CBA whistle-blower Jeff Morris queried the actions of his financial planner colleague ‘Dodgy Don’ in 2008, while CBA managers were acclaiming Don’s ‘success’, until the 2018 banking Royal Commission findings of failed leadership, the distinction between the success of highly profitable banks and the ‘principles’ they applied to achieve success were in sharp contrast to the *Leadercraft* principle in Figure 23. In the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, various scenes evoke a sense of ‘masterful management’ as main characters such as Gino, Wally, Rhonda together with minor characters such as Jools, Rowan, Sandra and Tamika appear to be successful in having their own agendas best served. In Act 4 Scene 5, the debate on the boat between Gino, Will, Victor and Oscar about the Government off-shore detention policy for asylum seekers intercepted at sea on SIEVs sees the two principles in Figure 23 writ large in this exchange between the drunken management cruiser Will and redeployee Victor:

WILL [*grinning, holding up his can*]: Masterful management!

VICTOR: Masterful management is not leadership, Will.

Obviously, this is not a simple matter. The ‘invisible hand’ to which Adam Smith referred in the 1770’s where a wealthy person pursuing their own self-interest will ultimately serve the interests of the poorest in society through the ‘magic’ of trickle-down economics continues to have many powerful supporters. One obvious problem, of course, as identified by Australian economics editor and author Ross Gittins is:

Your pursuit of your self-interest is neutered by my pursuit of mine. What the conventional economic model misses with its emphasis on individuals, competition and self-interest is that much of the success of the human animal – including its success economically – is owed to people co-operating to achieve changes of benefit to the whole community (Gittins, 2020).

The experimental Figure 23 table was created long before the Ross Gittins quote but there is alignment between the two. The focus of ‘*Leaderstern*’ on the left side of the table begins with the same collectivist aims as ‘*Leadercraft*’ on the right. However, by the fourth of the ‘5 Whys’, the ‘*Leaderstern*’ side becomes ultimately reduced to individual goals. This is precisely what we

saw in Steve Taylor's analysis where 'moments' like manager Frank 'outing his humanity' ultimately become '*a gift to the leader*' (Taylor, 2014, p. 249). In contrast, on the right side of the table, '*Leadcraft*' remains with collectivist aims throughout the '5 Whys' process.

So, if Gittins is correct and your pursuit of your self-interest is neutered by my pursuit of mine, how do we decide whose self-interest should prevail in terms of degrees of 'co-operation'?

Might it simply depend on how much each of us dare to *care* (Adler, 2010) about the other?

Or might the answer be more complex than that? The shifting tide retreats once again exposing the blurred, fluid edges of our leadership rockpools as they begin their temporary re-emergence into view.

Dunked

Writing in relation to organisational ethics, scholars Iain Munro and Torkild Thanem (2018) argue that 'present thinking on leadership is underpinned by a leader-follower dialectic' which privileges the leader's active traits whilst the follower 'must equally be assumed to be lacking in these same traits' (Munro & Thanem, 2018, p. 11). The argument in this PhD clearly supports their contention that: 'Without this primary imbalance, the riddle of the leadership fetish dissolves before our eyes' (Ibid.). Appropriating the work of Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677), Munro and Thanem agree with colleague Ann Cunliffe that people should strive to 'live a good life with others' (Cunliffe, 2009, p. 97). However, they employ Spinoza to make the 'affective leadership' distinction between joyful affects and sad affects claiming that the former *enhance* what we can do whereas we can be 'misled by sad affects' which *constrain* what we can do, thus reinforcing the assumed passivity and lack of power of followers (Munro & Thanem, 2018, p. 1). Summarising scholarly contributions to ethical leadership, Munro and Thanem claim that the ethicality of leaders is broadly categorised firstly, as role models, secondly, as culprits and finally, as involving the opening-up of leader-follower relations through care and responsibility (Ibid.). In several chapters of this PhD, we can see clear examples of all three categories including President John F. Kennedy as 'role model', members of the AoM President's Lunch as 'culprits' and Taylor's managers Ping and Frank as demonstrating 'care and responsibility'. On the latter, my experience of the email response from Professor Nancy Adler was a living example of 'daring to care'. However, according to Munro and Thanem:

If we want to avoid making such outrageous presumptions about leaders and followers, then we must separate the leadership discourse from the discourse of care (Ibid., p. 11).

But, if we 'must' separate leadership from *care*, where does that leave the *lived* argument of Nancy Adler? Munro and Thanem argue that Spinozian ethics openly addresses the politics of ethics which enables us 'to diagnose the limitations of existing critical approaches to leadership' (Ibid.). In addition to 'diagnostic powers', Munro and Thanem argue:

affective ethics is distinctive because it frames the question of ethical leadership not in terms of the virtues of the leader, or the followers' obedience to a given moral code, but in terms of affects that increase our collective powers of action. These collective powers require the "organisation of good encounters" to promote the collective use of reason, by means of which the common good can be pursued (Ibid.).

Whilst I support reframing ethical leadership away from the leader-follower dialectic, I question why Munro and Thanem seek to disregard the leader-follower binary but appear blind to, or accepting of, other binaries. For example, they argue for 'good encounters' and the 'good life' yet they fail to address consequential questions such as: 'good' according to who? And, who decides what is 'bad'? Is the 'good' versus 'bad' binary substantially any different to 'active leaders' (where active is good/desirable) versus 'passive followers' (where passive is bad/undesirable)? Furthermore, they rely on Spinoza's affective ethics but once again, their argument is based on the 'joyful affects' versus 'sad affects' binary that underpins Spinozian ethics. I will further explore this criticism of Spinoza in paragraphs below. However, the either/or dilemma posed by binary thinking is what helped to shift this PhD into a post-authenticity perspective.

The dilemma was evident in my meetings with the PhD supervisory panel. My creative practice research methodology, via the scriptology (Rhodes (2018) of *Work. Life. Balance.*, has experimented with delaying the quick jump to rational judgement and representational thinking by welcoming-in multiple perspectives, especially through paying attention to ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007). However, this has proved challenging on several levels, especially linguistically. For example, in trying to give a written explanation to supervisors regarding my reasoning for post-authenticity character development, I found myself describing a changing character as adopting a more *honourable* position which caused me to have to

reconsider the *dishonourable* position on the same linear plane. This tension plays-out in Act 4, Scene 5 of *Work. Life. Balance.* in relation to ‘sophistication’:

GINO: Strategic management. It’s OK that staff are too lazy or unsophisticated to understand the bigger picture but ...

WILL [*slurring*]: And the mindless masses. Unsophisticated as fuck.

VICTOR [*ignoring WILL*]: And I s’pose you’ll say that Dee died because she was unsophisticated?

GINO: Dee’s death was a tragedy. But if bein’ unable to see the big picture is unsophisticated, then she probably was.

OSCAR: Guess it goes without saying, Gino, that, one’s own sophistication is a given, I mean, in order to be able to judge someone else as ‘unsophisticated’.

In 2015, Torkild Thanem and his colleague Louise Wallenberg addressed criticism of their use of Spinozian ethics. Responding specifically to questions of ‘impossibility’ (for joyful encounters in brutal organisations) and ‘implicit dichotomies’, they argue that ‘Spinozian ethics is not purist [...] joyful encounters are [not all] purely joyful [...] [and] this is what makes Spinozian ethics sustainable. There is no illusion’ (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 246). They argue that:

The pursuit of a joyful organisational life requires us to enhance our powers in ways that enhance the powers of more or less agreeable others, for instance by striking alliances with unlikeable colleagues against more unlikeable managers, or getting to know or learn from someone who at first seemed to have nothing in common with us. This might put limits on openness and difference, but also on domination, exploitation and exclusion’ (Ibid.).

Aside from echoes, here, regarding the bullying by employees of ‘the unlikeable manager’, The Salesman, in Chapter 3 of this PhD, the argument provides a welcome balance to discourse in the field of organisational ethics. It seeks to neither romanticise nor demonise organisations and is an argument for diversity in organisations. It acknowledges that ‘sad encounters’ exist in organisations, but argues the cause of them ‘is increasingly related to tightening performance pressures’ (Ibid.) that reduce our own bodily capacities and stop us from meaningful engagement with embodied others. This, they argue, facilitates ‘a narcissistic and egoistic concern with individual rights and achievements’ (Ibid.), behaviours very similar to those Henry

Mintzberg (2005) uses to describe MBA graduates. It could be argued that seeking 'joyful encounters' such as aligning with others against an unlikeable manager is, itself, 'a narcissistic and egoistic concern with individual rights'.

However, I support the plea by Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) for Spinozian ethics not to be 'misread as a one-way process of crafting harmonious relations by minimizing difference or a selfish quest for freedom' (Ibid., p. 247). The argument that fruitful social relations is undermined by both individual employees and managers who 'insist on unrestrained freedom to do whatever they like' is central to the message in my EMA play, *The Myth of Themanus*. This PhD is building upon that work and includes the notion that 'harmony assumes variation, not sameness' (Ibid., p. 242). According to Thanem and Wallenberg, 'Excess power and freedom causes harm and suffering and provokes disagreement and resistance, which inevitably decomposes relations between people and organisations' (Ibid.). Here, we see echoes of psychologist Alistair Mant's argument regarding the 'crisis of leadership' in Chapter 1 of this PhD where authority becomes a 'bad object', which discourages good people from seeking office. Thanem and Wallenberg argue for Spinozian ethics over the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas (1905–1995) largely due to the latter being perceived as an 'ethics of impossibility and recognition [of the other] where ethics is posited against organisation' and management hierarchies (Ibid., p. 248). This links to Bauman's claims in Chapter 2 where the declaration of organisational action as *adiaphoric* makes it 'beyond good and evil' (Jensen, 2010, p. 425). While acknowledging that ethics is 'pre-reflective, pre-rational, unconditional and open to the other' under Levinasian ethics, Thanem and Wallenberg argue that his perception of politics as conscious, conditional and self-selected judgement 'closes down ethics' (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 238). They cite the Bevan and Corvellec (2007) view that Levinasian ethics sees organisations as 'bereft of corporeal subjectivity' and thus prevents the ethical requirement of openness to the other as a result of being 'bloodless, insensible, incapable of consciousness or intention' (Bevan & Corvellec, 2007, p. 212).

In short, Levinasian ethics 'ignores that organisations are made up of people with bodies' (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 238). This PhD firmly agrees that embodied human beings make up what we label as 'organisations' and that we know ourselves and others through our embodied experiences and encounters (Ibid., p. 242). As we saw with Mark Dibben and his colleagues (2017), the reversal of the Cartesian tenet of the knowing active mind changing the passive body to a view that holds experience as primary to consciousness allows us to *know*

through our bodies and then apply the critical reflexivity to which Ann Cunliffe (2009) refers in order to try to understand the experience. And I contend that creative practice research can assist in both creating the experience to affect and be affected and to reflect upon the experience. I also acknowledge the complexity identified by Carl Rhodes that acting politically to attend to others necessarily displaces attention from *other* others (Rhodes, 2012). According to Thanem and Wallenberg, the exercise of such power violates ethics due to the 'impossibility' of serving *all* others, simultaneously.

However, this PhD challenges the Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) argument in two key respects. Firstly, the focus on joyful affects which *enable* us, as distinct from sad affects which *constrain* us; and secondly, regarding their claim that putting the other before the self in corporeal generosity as a 'hostage to the other' makes the self 'fundamentally vulnerable' (Ibid., p. 239).

Essentially, I am attempting to *lean into* human sadness and vulnerability. I question why scholars such as Thanem and Wallenberg portray sad affects and vulnerability as undesirable experiences that belong on the 'bad' side of the organisational good-bad binary.

As detailed in Chapter 1, over several decades in management roles wrestling with the leader-follower dynamic, the questioning mantra 'Does it really have to be this way?' swirled around inside my head. On dozens of occasions, a similar mantra swirled around *outside* of me as I tried to convince management colleagues not to denigrate staff who spoke-up about negative aspects of the organisation. In my experience, the conventional management response to criticism of management is to close-down defensively, metaphorically place a huge 'T' for Troublemaker on the back of the complainant and seek to isolate them in a safe (for management) corner of the organisation. My consistent argument was this:

The outspoken staff are not the ones we should be worried about. At least they have enough care to see the issues, the motivation to think deeply about them and the courage to share their views with us. It is the silent ones that we should be most worried about. It is the 'say yes, do no' types who employ a consent and evade approach to dealing with management who will cause the most obstruction and damage to your management goals. So why punish those who speak-up to improve things?

That was my embodied, affective ‘hunch’, my gut feeling. However, there is credible scholarly evidence, against positive psychology, to support the view that sad affects can enhance organisational outcomes. In numerous laboratory experiments, social psychologist professor Joseph Forgas (2017; 2013) concluded that people with negative, or sad, affects, have the capacity to be less prone to judgemental errors, more resistant to eye-witness distortions, more motivated, and more sensitive to social norms (Forgas, 2013, p. 230). The intention in this PhD is not to critique the Forgas trials, however they are important to the PhD argument for a range of reasons, primarily related to moods and more accurate attention to detail, which I align with ‘affect’, ‘atmospheres’ and ‘attunement’ (Gherardi, 2017a). According to Forgas, moods are defined as ‘low-intensity, diffuse, and relatively enduring affective states without a salient antecedent cause, and therefore, little conscious content’ (Forgas, 2013, p. 225). As detailed in Chapter 5, the shared ground of an ‘affective atmosphere’ is an aesthetic experience (Strati, 2009) from where affect can emerge through our bodily senses:

Atmospheres surround people, things and environments: on entering a room, we can feel a serene or a tense atmosphere; an atmosphere ‘surrounds’ a couple, or one finds oneself ‘enveloped’ by an atmosphere; atmospheres ‘radiate’ from one individual to another; atmospheres are contagious, they appear, and disappear’ (Gherardi, 2017a, p. 211).

An example of one trial conducted by Forgas included the following:

Research participant shoppers in a small suburban shop remembered significantly more information about the interior of the shop when tested after they experienced negative mood [i.e. rainy, cold days with sombre classical music playing in the shop and dour, unsmiling client service] than positive mood shoppers [i.e. on sunny, warm days with upbeat pop music playing and friendly, smiling client service], despite the fact that the time they spent in the shop was controlled for (Forgas, 2013, p. 226).

The point to be emphasised is that the Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) Spinozian ethical focus on the enabling qualities of joyful affects, as distinct from the constraining sad affects, does not provide the whole story. Following the Joe Forgas research, it is equally possible that we can be ‘misled’ and ‘constrained’ by joyful affects and our organisational lives can actually be ‘enabled’ by sad affects.

Addressing the complaint of Hegel (1969 [1817]) and others that Spinoza neglected the power of sad affects, organisational scholars Pullen, Rhodes and Thanem (2017) follow Deleuze (1992) and Massumi (1988) by arguing that Spinoza acknowledged the inconsistent overlaps and imperfection of the terms 'joyful' and 'sad' (Pullen et al., 2017). They argue that Spinoza's focus was on affective intensity *thresholds*, a 'passage between sad and joyful affects, which affects us so much that we are overwhelmed, so little that we are under-stimulated or so much that our capacity to affect others is enhanced' (Ibid., p. 110). In this view, according to Massumi, the pre-personal intensity of the passage between bodily experiences involves 'unconscious forces that escape meaning and precede and exceed psychology's categories of affects' (Ibid.). However, critics of Massumi's theoretical perspective object to it 'ending up in vague and abstract speculation (Ibid., p. 111). Once again, we see another hint of issues raised above regarding Dibben et al. where we are forced into a position of one perspective over another. Is it possible that Massumi's view can operate in harmony with the Forgas psychological position? In Forgas' small suburban shop, on a rainy, cold day with sombre classical music playing, it is reasonable to argue that a 'passage between sad and joyful affects' can also occur, a pre-personal intensity threshold.

I argue that creative practice research through a scriptology (Rhodes, 2018) such as the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript has the potential to create an experience that evokes or renders sad affects. For example, the perceived injustices imposed by The System on characters such as Morris, Fatima, Dee and Penny, the tightrope walk of all characters that results in the untimely death of Dee, the anamorphic skull arisen from the canvas of Holbein's *The Ambassadors* to hover above the audience, the death of David Bowie and the evocative musical tone in his song, *Sorrow* each have the potential to induce sad affects for individual readers/audience members. This, in turn, enhances our capacity for embodied atmosphere attunement (Gherardi, 2017a) and to engage with critical reflexivity (Cunliffe, 2009) about organisational experiences with greater sensitivity, less distortion or self-deception, greater accuracy (Forgas, 2013; 2017) and potentially, with more empathy.

My second challenge to Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) relates to the inferred undesirability of the self being made more vulnerable through sad affects. In the Introduction, my 'mixed feelings about being an imposter' as a manager were detailed. Such feelings were partly born out of a sense of needing to 'play the manager' in the organisational 'game', never giving 'opponents' (both staff, peers and superiors) any ammunition to fire at me. My sense was that

I was not alone in playing this game, however, the topic was undiscussable. Through a variety of experiences, including in Customs, family life, the EMA and in this PhD, I have come to view the sense of freedom entailed in lowering the cloak of invulnerability, allowing our human flaws and fallibility to be more openly visible, as an important feature of being human. It has the potential to engender a trusted sense of shared human striving and struggle as we spin together on a rock in space. There is growing interest in the value of human vulnerability, much of which has been driven by US social work scholar and author Brené Brown who has written and lectured extensively on the subject (Brown, 2018; 2015; 2010; Travis, 2018). Making oneself vulnerable was also partly the message in Steven Taylor's manager case studies, Ping and Frank (Taylor, 2014) detailed above. In keeping with the theme of 'lowering the cloak', I will close Chapter 6 with a reflection from Customs in 2010.

The 2010 reflection below is a true story, or at least the central issue is true. Obviously, as in all reflections, the story is based on my represented recollection of what occurred. This reflection did not appear in early thesis drafts. I was reluctant to include it in this PhD because of the potential for it to be seen as self-indulgent. Ultimately, it has been included to illustrate both the *status games* of Steven Taylor (2014), the Spinozian *sad affects* of Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) and my own *vulnerability* in terms of why I feel misunderstood and unable to fit-in with the mainstream views of organisations.



Reflections
2010

Status games and sad affects.

'It's not your decision, Chris.'

'I'm not trying to cause trouble, Tonia.'

'Well you are causing trouble. At performance assessment end-cycle, it is *my* decision to determine who should receive a bonus and who should not.'

'But it just doesn't feel right.'

'That's not the point. We were tasked to deliver significant savings through the development and implementation of a new operating model by the end of June and we did it successfully. On time, under budget and mostly, without a drama. You deserve to be rewarded for your leadership of this project.'

'I did it because it needed to happen, not to get a bonus. Five hundred families have been impacted by this change. I've travelled around Australia listening to their stories. I've heard their frustration and seen their tears.'

'That's irrelevant. All change is hard. We all have to 'suck it up sweetheart' sometimes. No-one lost their job, they just had to move back to operational roles. Stop being a martyr, Chris, take the bonus and move on.'

'I'm not doing this to be a martyr. I got asked to do a job. I believed in the job that needed to be done. I did the job that I got paid to do. There is no bonus required.'

'But it's not *your* decision. What is your problem with bonuses?'

'I don't have a problem with bonuses. I gave a bonus to Susan and Jarrod. They did most of the work. I just had to steer things and support them.'

'You're not going to stop me accepting my bonus.'

'I'm not trying to, Tonia. You have other projects in your portfolio, a big job. Please don't feel guilty just because I said 'no' to a bonus.'

'It is still *my* decision. I will write it up to explain my decision and then add that you declined to accept my decision.'

'That's fine Tonia. I will sign whatever you choose to write.'

'You are going to get a target on your back if you keep doing stuff like this.'



Enclosed in my own four walls, I found myself as an immigrant imprisoned in a foreign country; [...] I saw my family as strange aliens whose foreign customs, rites, and very language defied comprehension; [...] though I did not want it, they forced me to participate in their bizarre rituals; [...] I could not resist.

- Franz Kafka (in Preece, 2002, pp. 15-31)

WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 6 Scene 1

[Lights rise on the board-room with all panel members in place, except KG.]

ROWAN *[annoyed]*: ... but he said 1pm and it's now ten past.

RHONDA: I told you Rowan, he's on the phone. Must be important.

ROWAN: What? More important than this hearing?

WALLY *[casually scrolling through messages on his phone]*: Just be patient.

[The door bursts open and KG bounds into the room.]

KG *[excitedly]*: Great news everyone!

ROWAN: What?

KG: You'll never believe it!

ROWAN: Believe what?

KG: Just had a call from the team we sent down to The Lakes this morning. And from Canberra. Significant narcotics detection. Cocaine. Maybe a half a kilo.

WALLY *[slightly stunned, raising his eyes from his phone]*: How? ... *[pause]* ... Where?

KG: Half buried. Under tea trees. In the dunes along the river, near the entrance.

RHONDA: What? Near where our boat ...

ROWAN *[amazed]*: Jesus! Gino's intel ...

WALLY *[looking up from his phone]*: Surely not. Do you really think ..?

ROWAN *[nodding in amazement]*: Crooks must have seen our FIBS boat and dumped the 'gear'. Unbelievable!

KG: Unbelievable alright! Best news I've heard in days! Godsend.

[Lights fade.]

ACT 6 SCENE 2 Tolling Bells

[The end of a presentation ceremony, the gathered crowd begins filtering away off the stage leaving three characters on stage together, one in the background, lurking in the shadows as if waiting for an opportunity to speak, whilst the two centre-stage characters – one with his back

to the audience – conclude their debrief of the presentation ceremony. KG stands in the spotlight, facing the audience.]

KG [*proudly*]: This is such a wonderful fillip for our region. Reflected glory for everyone! It's not every day that someone from our region wins the prestigious 'National K.R.A.P. Award'. How you managed to turn a disastrous situation into a magnificent victory for our region is simply breathtaking in its professional mastery. Also pleasing to see you safely out of hospital to receive the award.

[The spotlight shifts to the foreground character as he turns to face the audience.]

GINO [*smiling*]: Happy to be of service, KG.

KG: Doctors convinced your fracture has healed?

GINO: All good now. Landing on that mintzberg was like hitting concrete. Was touch-and-go in the water, right leg just couldn't kick. Went under many times but [*winks*] ... nothing else if not a survivor, KG.

KG [*curious*]: Swim all the way to shore?

GINO [*hesitantly*]: Well ... not all the way ... Oscar got to me before ...

KG: Ah, that's right ... I did hear that ... Oscar activated that small craft didn't he ...

[GINO nods.]

KG: What's it called again? ... not a life-raft ... it's a ...

GINO: 'Tender' ... [*pause*] ... operatives use it to get to places the main vessel can't access.

KG [*tapping GINO on the shoulder before exiting stage left*]: Well, it's certainly done its job for you Gino. Great to have you back.

[GINO remains centre stage as VICTOR emerges from the shadows.]

VICTOR [*loudly*]: I know what you're up to.

[GINO turns towards the approaching VICTOR.]

VICTOR: Vague rumours been circulating for years.

GINO: Yeah?

VICTOR [*deadpan*]: Never really believed 'em meself. Too far-fetched.

GINO: Far-fetched, eh?

VICTOR: People always get jealous of others' success ... Just like The Raiders ... Make-up stories ... Tall poppy, fake news.

[GINO shrugs, spreading out his hands in a questioning gesture, then begins to walk away, a pronounced limp on his right leg.]

VICTOR: 'The Cocaine King' ... *[pause]* ... They always said you had a nose for it.

GINO *[feigning admiration for his award]*: Shiny new trophy.

VICTOR: You know what I'm talking about.

GINO: Straight to the pool room.

[Silent pause.]

VICTOR: You had a big detection when you were a young bloke, didn't you?

GINO *[nods]*: You got a trophy room?

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: ... I mean ... before you won all those promotions.

GINO: Some people get jealous of success.

VICTOR: Put a bloke inside for ... how long was it ... twelve years wasn't it?

GINO: Flawed humans.

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: He reckons it should've been more.

[GINO stares, unmoved.]

VICTOR *[teasing]*: Why'd he reckon it should've been more, Gino ... *[pause]* ... I mean ... what crook admits to importing more 'gear' than they're actually charged for?

GINO: According to a fellow inmate.

[VICTOR stares, unmoved.]

GINO: Pair of drugheads.

[VICTOR stares, unmoved.]

GINO: Flawed humans.

[Silent pause.]

VICTOR *[deadpan, ignoring the question]*: Died in jail, didn't he?

GINO *[staring at the floor]*: Both did ... London would've been a better trophy ...

[Silent pause.]

VICTOR *[provocatively]*: Why ... do y'think ... is it ... that 'The Cocaine King' only ever finds cocaine?

GINO: Que? G?

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: Straightforward question ... *[pause]* ... If 'The Cocaine King' is so good, why doesn't he also find heroin ... *[pause]* ... and ice ... *[pause]* ... and other gear, too?

[Silent pause.]

GINO: Robbed me of the London job.

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: Gino?

GINO: Mustn't spoil the K.R.A.P. ... *[pause]* ... Got us off the hook.

VICTOR: Only cocaine?

GINO: You don't fish.

VICTOR: Only Marlin.

GINO: Game fish! It's all a game, Victor. Everyone plays it ... you know that.

[Silent pause.]

GINO: Take yourself too seriously, champ. Lighten up ... play the game too ... for your family.

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: Games within games ... within games ... *[pause]* ... And only a precious few know the rules ...

GINO: Trophy fish are best.

VICTOR: ... and then the rule-makers change the rules ... to kill-off their allies in the previous game.

GINO: Play the game.

VICTOR: Taxpayer doesn't pay me to play games ... 'specially when they don't even know there is a game, let alone the rules.

GINO: Stop you 'whaling' about redeployment.

VICTOR: You know who does pay?

[GINO stares in silence.]

VICTOR: We all do ... *[pause]* ... Not just the unwitting workplace losers ... not just people rotting on Manus ... the entire system of government, the public service ... the society we deceive ... Humanity pays ... It's a race to the bottom.

GINO: Hear you champ ... *[pause]* ... surrounded by sharks ... *[pause]* ... Life's rough ... gotta stare 'em in the eye ... don't blink ... that's leadership, champ.

[VICTOR remains unmoved.]

GINO: Can't beat 'em, join 'em.

[VICTOR remains unmoved.]

GINO: You're a smart bloke ...

VICTOR *[interrupting]*: Yes, I'm a smart bloke ... *[pause]* ... So, Gino, ... why only cocaine?

[GINO stares, in frustrated disbelief.]

VICTOR: Why are all 'Cocaine King' detections dumped or hidden, conveniently with no known owner established?

GINO [*limping erratically around the stage*]: Eye like a dead fish ... 'Cos you are one ... Been tryin' to help you ... Career's over buddy.

[*VICTOR stares, unmoved.*]

GINO: Buried at the bottom of the sea ...

VICTOR [*deadpan*]: What ... like you buried that cocaine down at The Lakes?

GINO: I WAS IN HOSPITAL! [*Toning down the volume and limping towards VICTOR to eyeball him.*]

VICTOR: Scales of justice, Gino ...

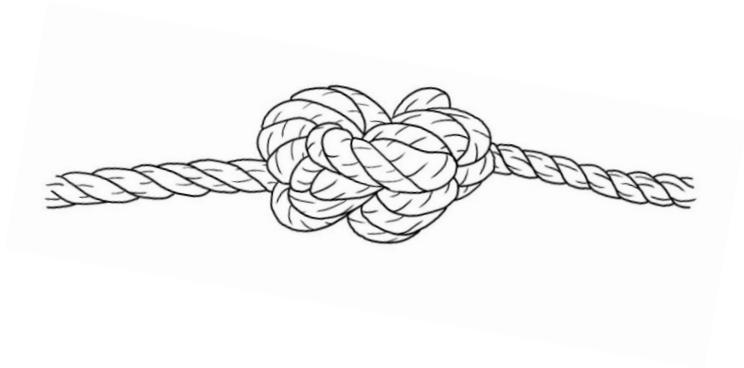
[*The large screen zeroes-in on GINO's face.*]

GINO: Got no evidence. No witnesses. No friggin' idea ... [*pause*] ... Only scales you'll see are on the fish you'll be cleaning when you're unemployable across the entire public service ... You got me?

[*The large screen shifts to the face of VICTOR who stares dully straight ahead, silent and unmoved.*]

GINO [*limping towards exit, stage left*]: Now kindly, fuck off.

[*Lights fade.*]



VII ARRIVALS

People like to separate storytelling which is not fact from history which is fact. They do this so that they know what to believe and what not to believe. This is very curious. How is that no one will believe that the whale swallowed Jonah, when everyday Jonah is swallowing the whale? I can see them now, stuffing down the fishiest of fish tales, and why? Because it is history. Knowing what to believe had its advantages. It built an empire and kept people where they belonged, in the bright realm of the wallet ...

– Jeanette Winterson (1985) *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*

Dry dock

In Chapter 6, themes were examined regarding leader-follower relations, ethical connection, freezing and unfreezing through models of organisational change leadership and theatre practice where a fixed sense of being frozen in time was advocated by several respected scholars in their respective fields (Kotter, 1996; Taylor, 2008) as a means of understanding the world. Here, elements of that story continue.

For our milestone wedding anniversary on 15 February 2017, I surprised my wife with a huge rock. At least, that was my story.

Busy lives with paid and volunteer work, four children, elderly parents and a PhD candidature, not necessarily in that order, meant that the milestone was destined to float by without any significant marking of the occasion. As the day drew nearer, a simple advertisement for a short stay visit to see a Field of Lights caught my eye, so a last-minute decision was made.

Whereas the majestic Canadian Rockies are the heart of Canada, with mountain peaks and raging rivers below, the spiritual heart in the so called 'red centre' of Australia is also a rock: the sandstone monolith of Uluru that is believed to have begun its formation 550 million years ago on a sea bed. Due to its intensely hot desert climate, there are no raging rivers at Uluru. To get to the nearest ocean from Uluru it is over two thousand kilometres to the South Pacific Ocean near Sydney and Brisbane in the east and a similar distance in the opposite direction to the Indian Ocean near Perth in the west. Its remote location, 450km from the nearest large town of Alice Springs, reinforces the spiritual sense of tranquil stillness, calmness and silence it engenders. In the wet season, waterfalls cascade down the side crevices of the rock to form natural watering holes around its base where the local indigenous Anangu tribe of the

Yankunytjatjara and Pitjantjatjara people have raised their families for thousands of years. For the Anangu, the name Uluru means 'Giant Pebble'.

In 1770, Adam Smith was completing his famous economics treatise, "An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations" – commonly known as "The Wealth of Nations" – prior to its first publication on March 9, 1776. In the same year, on the other side of the world, Captain James Cook was on voyages to the South Pacific claiming possession of the east coast of Australia and reporting his observations along the New South Wales coastline that formed the basis for Britain's decision to establish a British colony at Botany Bay in 1788. The philosophical doctrine upon which Cook's claim rested was terra nullius, 'as "empty" or no-one's land'. However, Kings College London's Dr Peter Kilroy (2016) argues:

Terra nullius was never about "emptiness". There are many "settler" accounts of signs of occupation, architecture and/or agricultural cultivation, albeit often witnessed on the margins of encampments ... [which were] wilfully ignored ... for reasons of [settlers'] self-interest to stake their claim to a portion of land ... To that extent, these accounts, and those of Cook before them, present ample evidence to undermine their own claims to Australia. This is often the case under conditions of colonialism. Its beneficiaries are often remarkably adept at tolerating flawed logic at odds with direct evidence when it is in their interest to do so.

Based on Kilroy's 21st Century account regarding 18th Century human behaviour, and with a hint of Adam Smith's 'invisible hand', phrases such as *'tolerating flawed logic at odds with direct evidence when it is in their interest to do so'* might have been useful for Commissioner Kenneth Hayne to employ in his 2019 Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry Final Report. But more on this later.

Our historical focus shifts to the 19th and 20th Centuries. It was not until 19 July 1873, that a surveyor named William Gosse sighted the Uluru landmark and took the liberty to name it Ayers Rock in honour of then Chief Secretary of South Australia, Sir Henry Ayers. In the welcome peaceful years following World War Two, as global stability brought economic progress and tourism became more widely available to the masses, an informal 'rite (right?) of passage' emerged for brave travellers venturing to the 'Red Centre'. Like victorious warriors returning from battle to their families, the spoils of victory were displayed for all to see on these intrepid sightseers via the words emblazoned across their basic cotton tee shirts

following the triumphant climb to the top of Uluru, clothing mass-produced locally in Australian factories by unskilled, post-War, migrant factory workers:

“I Conquered Ayers Rock”



The Uluru climb was permanently closed on 26 October 2019, primarily out of respect for the sacred site of the indigenous Anangu people. In February 2017, Uluru was still open for visiting tourists to climb, despite the majority of visitors, including my wife and I, who respected the sacred site and the wishes of the Anangu people. However, it was a sign at the base of the rock that caught our eye. A sign that potentially holds great significance, not only for indigenous respect and cultural heritage, but also for the study of organisations and leadership.



Figure 24 Connect not conquer

‘This place has a story’, one that might respond to Chief Scientist Alan Finkel’s call as described in the Introduction. A story to challenge the prevailing perspectives about respect and power. A story that challenges us to connect not conquer.

Connect not conquer.

As we have seen with the relational interdependency of Sharon Parks’ potter, creative artists endeavour to work with their medium, to respect its place in the world as much as their own:

A potter, for example, must learn that clay has its own life, its own potential and limits, its own integrity. The potter develops a relationship with clay, spending time with it, learning to know its properties, how it will interact with water, discovering that if you work it too hard, it will collapse, and if you work with it, it will teach you its strength, your limits, and the possibilities of co-creation (Parks, 2005, p. 211).

According to British playwright Steve Waters, the work of a playwright differs from that of a potter or a sculptor, ‘looming over their block of stone in a posture of mastery’ (Waters, 2010, p. 1). The work of a playwright is ‘more akin to a miner working their way out from within the rock, hoping to bring some precious metal to light. Plays remain stubbornly paradoxical at their core [...] as full of space and silence as they are of words and intentions’ (Ibid.).

As playwright Samuel Beckett observes, ‘The author is the worm at the core of the apple’ (Ibid.).

In *Work. Life. Balance.*, I have tried to learn to understand the medium in order to connect with its potential to create an affective experience that can reveal new insights about organisational leadership. This learning has included the *dramatis personae* in character development (both human and non-human), the plotline, powers of speech, the setting, the time and space (both in the action and for the reader), the forms of feeling and art of suggestion, the world inside the apple or at the core of the rock (Waters, 2010). All of this with a view to not forcing it; to slow the quick jump to representational thinking; to remain patient, flexible and adaptive; to embrace complexity by trying to resist the simplicity of a binary, linear solution; to evoke, render, show not tell; to experiment and learn from mistakes by sitting with vulnerability; becoming comfortable being uncomfortable; to listen to the characters; and to allow the artefact to think and speak to its creator. In other words, to connect not conquer.

Developing the capacity to connect not conquer is an ongoing struggle of becoming, never more evident than in playing the organisational game of manager or leader. The poet David Whyte would like to see the term ‘manager’ disappear from our understanding of leadership:

We only have to look at the most important word in the lexicon of the present workplace – *manager* – to understand its inherent weakness. *Manager* is derived from the old Italian and French words *maneggio* and *manege*, meaning the training, handling and riding of a horse [...] images of domination [...] and the taming of potentially wild energy. It also implies a basic unwillingness on the part of the people to be managed, a force to be corralled and reined in [...] most people don’t respond very passionately or very creatively to being ridden (Whyte, 2001, pp. 240-241, original italics).

Detailed in the Reflections below, my management experiences in Customs with the consistently late-arriving shift-worker Riccardo, Marcellin’s Duds and the ‘perennially lazy’ Caffeine Kaylene provide an insight into the struggles associated with relational leadership and our capacity to connect.



Reflections
Reflections

Riccardo

Of the sixteen shift teams in the Customs and Border Protection workforce at Melbourne Airport International Passenger Terminal, ‘Riccardo’ had been a member of many of them. This was largely due to the ‘avoid conflict, move the problem’ tendencies of team leaders and supervisors when faced with a so-called difficult staff member. If an unwitting, short-staffed supervisor from another team was happy to accept an unexpected additional resource such as Riccardo onto their team, then the shift team change would be swiftly organised before the receiving supervisor (typically a newcomer to the airport) became aware of Riccardo’s penchant for arriving late to work. It was only when his serial lateness became common

knowledge and there were no unsuspecting supervisors remaining, that the performance management matter of Riccardo was escalated from the operational floor to management. Amongst operational floor supervisors, Riccardo was widely described as a 'dud'.

The request to management was made by a cohort of team leaders and supervisors with the clear intended outcome of getting Riccardo removed from the dynamic 24/7 airport environment into a more sedate workplace pasture in the city office.

Whilst seeking tangible evidence of Riccardo's repeated attendance misdemeanours, I became intrigued at his levels of ingenuity to prevent his tardiness from being detected by his supervisors. For example, peak flight arrival times occurred in the morning hours from 5am to 11am, so when Riccardo was running late for a 5am start, he would call the central control room to ask one of his team colleagues to check the roster to see where he was due to work. As distinct from the relative calm of being rostered in the front office, where background administrative tasks were quietly completed from 5am until the airport office opened to the public at 8:30am, one of the key rostering positions was the Green Marshall point, the final 'Nothing to Declare' point for passengers as they departed the heavily controlled, CCTV-laden Customs Hall, handing their Customs declaration card to the radio-armed Customs marshall at the Green Exit. In short, the Green Marshall is a pivotal role so, if left unattended and radio calls unanswered, the absence would be immediately noticed and acutely monitored.

The Riccardo conversation with control room colleagues would invariably go like this:

Riccardo: I'm running late. Quick, Josh, can you tell me where I'm rostered?

Josh: Green Marshall point.

Riccardo: Shit! Who's rostered in the front office?

Josh: Brownie.

Riccardo: OK. Can you grab a radio and race it over to Brownie and get him to cover the Green Marshall exit until I get there.

It was clear that my management role in this performance management 'issue' was to rid ourselves of the issue once-and-for-all. In a hierarchical structure of problem escalation, such resolution typically involved some form of 'punishment' for the offender, directed by the higher-ranked officer, with a view to forcing the offender to conform or comply. In the case of Riccardo, the issuing of directions and 'pulling rank' was a tried-and-failed strategy by

numerous team leaders and supervisors demanding a change in behaviour. In other words, following previous failed attempts at forcing compliance, my task was to *conquer* Riccardo.

When he arrived at my office, the grim expression and furrowed brow on Riccardo's face suggested that he knew his fate had been decided. He had repeatedly pushed boundaries to the limit and had reached a dead-end. As we discussed his extensive record of late attendance across a range of shift teams, he was asked to detail his various attempts to avoid late arrival detection. Each of his creative strategies suggested that he had actually taken responsibility for covering his own short-term absences. This was unusual in a strict hierarchical environment.

Rather uniquely, he described these initiatives as less about getting caught by his boss than covering the job that needed to be done. When I asked how he felt about getting caught by his boss, he appeared relatively relaxed and joked about the various frustrated antics of his supervisors when trying to make him conform. For me, this was a refreshing attitude by a staff member ranked at the bottom of the Customs organisation chart. For some reason, I was moved to learn more about Riccardo's life. As we discussed his family life with a wife and two children, his migrant parents and his love of football, the conversation turned to his volunteer role as coach of the second-grade team at his local suburban football club. Riccardo's eyes lit up, his voice became louder, more passionate, his quickened speech becoming increasingly more animated as he explained his team's promising chances of making the finals and possibly even winning the premiership.

It was only then that the penny finally dropped for me.

'Who do you have to beat to win the premiership?' I asked. 'I mean, who's your main archrival?'

'Aberfeldie', Riccardo replied. 'Bunch of pricks, but the best team by far.'

'Can I ask a hypothetical question?'

'Sure.'

'How would you feel, if it was the last game of the season and you had to win to make the finals?'

'Pumped.'

'And you were playing Aberfeldie?'

'Even more pumped.'

'So, you're the coach. How would you feel if both teams are on the ground, the umpire blows the whistle to start the game, and you realise that your best defender, midfielder and best goal-kicker are all running late to the game and are not on the ground yet?'

'Pissed off!'

'So, how do you think your supervisors feel when one of their best performers consistently turns-up late to work?'

Riccardo's stunned expression was worth a thousand words as a dawning realisation washed across his face.

Initially, the cohort of team leaders and supervisors were unhappy with me for retaining Riccardo at the airport. Their displeasure was short-lived, replaced by amazement as Riccardo quickly became an active coach/mentor to trainees and new staff and a positive creative contributor in the workplace, including a role model of consistent punctuality. He even won a promotion on the back of his deserved new-found respected reputation.



The point of this reflection is not about some kind of 'Hollywood ending'. Indeed, a few years later, I heard that Riccardo had lapsed into old habits and had drifted again into the 'not to be trusted' category in the judgement of his superiors. The point of the reflection is the powerful potential of the 'connect not conquer' message shared with us by the Anangu people on the sign at Uluru.

But is it an example of leadership and management finding a way to turn around the behaviour of an underperforming employee? This PhD argues that it is not.

Since the 1960s, a case study routinely employed in university MBA programs and businesses to demonstrate leadership connection with employees, and resultant employee connection with the vision and goals of the business involved US President John F. Kennedy and his visit to

the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA). As the story goes, according to management consultant Laura Weaving, the President interrupted his 1962 tour of NASA to stop to greet an African-American janitor with the words:

“Hi, I’m Jack Kennedy. What are you doing?”

“Well, Mr. President, I’m helping put a man on the moon,” the janitor responded.

To a lot of people, the NASA janitor was just cleaning the building. But in the larger story unfolding around him, he was helping to make history. The janitor got it. He understood the vision and his part in it, and he had a purpose (Weaving, 2016).

Reinforcing the ongoing currency of this message in organisational culture today, the founder and CEO of Facebook, Mark Zuckerberg, recounted the story as one of his favourites:

One of my favorite stories is when John F. Kennedy visited the NASA space center, he saw a janitor carrying a broom and walked over and asked what he was doing. The janitor responded: 'Mr. President, I'm helping put a man on the moon.'

Zuckerberg continued:

‘Purpose is that sense that we are part of something bigger than ourselves, that we are needed, that we have something better ahead to work for.’

Told this way, you can almost feel the pride ooze from this janitor. Presumably, he's the low man on any org chart that tells the story of America's space exploration. But there he is, beaming at the mention of the common purpose he shares with the very men who would eventually walk on the moon (Given, 2017).

Oozing pride (which may require some floor mopping) or otherwise, it is illuminating that in the seemingly endless recounting of this story over the past fifty years, the NASA janitor does not appear to have a name or personal identity. ‘Jack Kennedy’ is the charming, inclusive President but the NASA janitor is simply the NASA janitor, albeit the NASA janitor who ‘gets it’, presumably thanks to exemplary NASA leadership communication and staff engagement policies.

Other signs emerge in the reflections below, Marcellin’s Duds and Caffeine Kaylene, which suggest that there might be more to ‘connection’ than simply the glorified leader/manager

who is able to engage, unify, inspire, empower and motivate their workforce in order to maximise productivity.



Reflections
Reflections

Marcellin's 'duds'

An interesting observation of significance exists regarding the labelling of team members like Riccardo as 'duds' by the key formal and informal opinion leaders in opposing teams. From an overarching management perspective, every team leader or supervisor complained to me about so-called 'duds' on other teams, e.g. "I'm really lucky 'cos I've got a great team. I'd hate to have some of the duds on other teams ...". Apart from its peculiarly abhorrent nature, the term 'duds' became problematic as I could guarantee that every single team on the 24/7 shift roster had complained to me about the 'duds' on other teams.

When this fact was highlighted to the sixteen-member cohort of highly capable team leaders at a 2001 off-site leadership conference, a quiet hush fell over the previously confident vocal proceedings. I watched as slightly blushing team leaders reflected on what my confession to them actually meant. Firstly, what were other team leaders saying to 'the boss' about them? Secondly, what does it say about the perceived 'duds' on their own 'great' team, a greatness that some team leaders might previously have believed was a result of their own great team *leadership*? The leadership 'seduction' to which Amanda Sinclair (2006) refers appears to have credence.

This cultural phenomenon became even more intriguing in subsequent years, especially during job interviews with applicants for team leader positions. On specific selection panel interviews, an open question I sometimes used centred on the following cultural theme:

- *How would you [the applicant] handle the distinction (if any) between so-called 'duds' on other teams compared to the perception of 'duds' on the team you are potentially about to lead?*

Some interviewees appeared to struggle with this deliberately provocative question, possibly through nerves or trying to predict the 'correct' answer the selection panel might have wanted to hear. In 2002, however, one interviewee, Marcellin, was unfazed and had no hesitation in providing a categorical response.

According to Marcellin, every team has 'duds' in them but the difference is that the 'duds' on our team are '*our* duds'. Consequently, Marcellin's matter-of-fact claim was that we wrap our arms around them, we support them, we cover for them; whereas '*their* duds' are simply open targets for criticism. 'Quod erat demonstrandum' (QED).



Bubbling brook

It has occurred to me through the creative practice research of this PhD, that perhaps Marcellin is correct about human behaviour in organisations. Perhaps our individual vulnerability causes us to seek security and safety in the company of others. Perhaps our bodies feel more balanced or connected when other bodies share in our experience of belonging. 'We wrap our arms around them.' Writing *Work. Life. Balance.* has enabled me to sit with these feelings, to allow time for my body to become attuned to their affects, to connect with the possibilities they generate. As Marcellin shows us, we make allowances for 'our own'. Marcellin was referring to our own 'duds' but might this also apply to our 'children' or perhaps even our own 'raiders'? Could this be why we cover-up unethical behaviour, why we not only celebrate the success of the Dodgy Don's in our organisations but marvel at them? Despite believing that we, ourselves, would never be capable of 'doing a Dodgy Don', could this be why we *brook* the ostracising and denigration of whistle-blowers such as Jeff Morris, we close them down while we keep our heads down, protecting our own safety, security and privileges of *belonging*? Belonging to what? Human nature?

But then, as we saw in Chapter 6, Barbara Czarniawska, a leading scholar in her field, argues that:

Management and organisation studies are not about human nature, but about certain ways of life, and, more specifically, about certain ways of work (Czarniawska, 2017, p. 75).

Unlike Marcellin and other colleagues, there was one, clearly more 'sophisticated' and empathic supervisor who I rarely heard referring to staff as 'duds'. Her name was Kaylene. Aside from empathy or sophistication, there may have been other reasons for Kaylene's relaxed, friendly, uncritical demeanour towards staff. Despite being at the same level as other team leaders on the organisation chart, Kaylene's rostering and administration role meant that she had no staff reporting directly to her. This placed her in the unique position of being viewed by her peers with both joyful collegiality and frustrated envy. Why envy? Because Kaylene had no direct 'people management' responsibilities. It seems that having people to manage makes life so much more difficult and complicated. As the old saying goes in hospital management settings: 'A management job in a hospital would be perfect if there were no staff and no patients' – and so it is in an international airport with no staff and no passengers. Might this be why current business leaders and university vice-chancellors are crying-out for university graduates with so-called *soft* skills. But then, who decided such skills would be labelled 'soft' making them sound trivial and of low importance relative to 'hard' skills? Soft skills are inclusive of difficult to master people skills. Aren't they?

MORRIS [*faithfully*]: No, they're not. They're easy. Soft skills are the easy ones.

THE SYSTEM [*definitively*]: No, soft skills are the hard ones ... (*Work. Life. Balance. Act 3 Scene 1*).



Reflections
Reflections

Caffeine Kaylene

Kaylene was an intelligent, experienced supervisor in her early forties who had a reputation amongst her peers and subordinates as a sociable, coffee-loving, single woman with an

apparent aversion to work that was best identified with the use of four letters: L A Z Y. When I arrived as the manager of Kaylene's work area in 2000, I was inundated with consistent yet casually 'helpful advice' from peers and subordinates about Kaylene's work ethic.

After a brief period of making my own observations, and in fairness to her subordinates and peers, I set about managing Kaylene's work engagement. Head office in Canberra were rolling-out a new Complaints & Compliments Handling System (CCHS), the work area needed a 'change champion' so Kaylene and I discussed a development opportunity for her involving a trip to Sydney for a three-day CCHS train-the-trainer seminar. The development plan was for Kaylene to accept responsibility as the workplace CCHS trainer and coordinator in addition to her current role, to establish and deliver a CCHS training program for all staff in the work area, via one-hour training sessions for each team. Kaylene thought about the opportunity overnight and advised the next day that she was 'excited, energised and can't wait to get started'. Her peers and subordinates were less 'excited and energised' when her appointment was announced, believing I had made a grave mistake and that Kaylene was being rewarded, despite previous poor performance.

The arrangement was built-into her formal performance agreement and we both signed-off on the agreed details, my intent being, as a shrewd 'masterful' manager, to cover myself.

Kaylene attended the Sydney CCHS seminar, returned with folders of material, trained only one team with whom she was most friendly then advised that she did not feel motivated enough to train the remaining staff. After rejecting a number of my pleas, and with the national CCHS roll-out to the travelling public a mere three weeks away, Kaylene happily shared her materials with me, was generous in giving me intelligent guidance and expressed genuine appreciation for me covering her training role. I conducted the CCHS training for the remaining teams, whilst enduring the 'we told you so' barbs from her peers.

When Kaylene and I sat down to conduct her end-cycle performance rating discussion, I tried to remain objective. As we stepped through the process of checking against Kaylene-agreed performance actions for the cycle, tears began welling in her eyes. Despite her emotion Kaylene answered honestly, and repeatedly, in the negative, each time she was asked: 'Did you complete that agreed task?' However, she could provide no reason for her failure to complete the tasks. After giving Kaylene a few moments to compose herself and, at the same time having to compose myself (as 'difficult conversations' of this nature were not a routine drill for me), we re-convened the meeting and I reluctantly gave Kaylene the lowest formal rating of

'Did not meet requirements'. No performance pay. No salary increment. A relatively rarely used negative formal assessment rating that would significantly limit future promotion prospects for her.

Feeling nervous at having to deliver the solemn verdict and steeling myself for an angry, frustrated protest or complaint from Kaylene, I was jolted from my self-pitying stupor by her calm, measured, steadily resigned response. Kaylene's gentle, philosophical words shook me:

It doesn't matter, Chris. At the end of the day, all that matters is who will be looking down into that graveyard hole when we are in it. You'll be OK. You have four beautiful children and I'm genuinely happy for you. I wish I did too. And Jane will be there for you. I will have no-one. But that's OK. I'm not bitter about that, it's just how it is.

The sudden realisation regarding Kaylene's vulnerability together with my own ignorant judgement, my failure to see and caringly connect with her experience, beyond the conquering management hubris of 'performance agreements' and 'key result areas' and 'complaints and compliments handling systems', was palpable.

Kaylene's reference to my wife, Jane, ignited a reminiscence of earlier days when I would arrive home from a busy day of management problem-solving at Customs and Border Protection to a frazzled Jane needing to debrief her day of changing nappies, chasing toddlers, refereeing 'childish' fights, navigating kindergarten and mother's group politics (also known as 'adult' fights). Over a cup of tea or a glass of wine, Jane would fervently download all that she needed to get off her chest. Then, stupidly believing I was helping, I would proceed to tell her what she needed to do to resolve each of the issues that she had raised. It was only then that she would start crying, not because of the problems she was sharing, but because of my insensitive condescension, my quick leap to all-conquering cognitive solutions, my self-absorbed failure to allow in any sense of embodied atmosphere attunement (Stewart, 2007; Gherardi, 2017a; 2017b). In short, my failure to connect.



The key point about Riccardo and Kaylene is that an embodied, sensory experience of emergent space and time needs to be allowed-in so that connection can be a two-way

relational process between equal human beings, each equally vulnerable, equally open and with the capacity to affect and be affected. Perhaps this was the message of the Anangu people on the sign at Uluru. The Marcellin story suggests that he got close to such connection but only with people who 'belong' or were a member of his 'in group' or 'tribe'.

However, valid questions have been raised in fields such as business ethics, critical management studies (CMS), organisation, management and leadership studies regarding how limited the potential might be for application of the indigenous Anangu cultural message in an organisational context, primarily due to prevailing exploitative power relations, dehumanizing bureaucratic processes and economic imperatives.

Rockpools of generosity, reciprocity and atrocity.

Some French philosophers make a distinction between self-maintenance and fidelity:

maintien de soi, maintenance of oneself, sustains an identity over the course of time;

constance à soi, fidelity to oneself, invokes virtues such as being honest with oneself about one's defects.

Emmanuel Levinas [1905–1995], has tried to make clear, though, that *constance à soi* has a social dimension, in terms of being responsible for other people. This is at once a very simple and a complicated notion. Simple because it asserts my sense of self-worth depends on whether others can rely upon me. Complicated because I need to act responsibly, even if I do not know myself, and no matter how confused or indeed shattered my own sense of identity (Sennett, 1998, p. 145).

In Chapter 6, I examined a range of perspectives some of which challenged Levinas' ethics and some which highlighted the *violence* inflicted on people in organisations (Hughes, 2016; Taylor, 2002; 2009). Organisational ethics came into my PhD focus with scholars Iain Munro and Torkild Thanem (2018) arguing for the reframing of ethical leadership away from the leader-follower dialectic towards 'affective leadership' through Spinozian joyful affects which they claim *enhances* what we can do in our organisational lives, as distinct from the *constraints* of sad affects. Here, there is partial alignment with the ordinary affects of Stewart (2007) detailed in Chapter 5 and it was building upon Thanem's earlier work with Louise Wallenberg (2015) arguing for Spinozian ethics over the ethics of Emmanuel Levinas. The 2015 argument was

largely based on the belief that Levinas' ethics are an 'ethics of impossibility and recognition [of the other] where ethics is posited against organisation' (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 248). Organisation scholars Carl Rhodes and Robert Westwood (2016) also examined the ethical philosophy of Levinas in which 'the ethical exceeds calculation of advantage, of expectation of reciprocity' (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016, p. 235). Levinas is not against reciprocity but he believes it is distinct from ethics arguing that 'it is wrong to consider reciprocity as the basis for ethics' (Ibid., p. 237). When reciprocity is applied to market-based exchange, however, dating back to the 'father of economics' Adam Smith, one central pillar of the market is established. It is also built into the more recent managerialist perspective in organisations and business which considers reciprocity as a 'moral condition of the employment relationship as couched in terms of organisational citizenship behaviour' (Ibid.). In short, to separate reciprocity from ethics is to separate ethics from organisations.

Rhodes and Westwood's study is important to this PhD for a number of reasons. Firstly, it highlights the chasm between social and economic relations which helps to expand upon my experimental *Leaderstern* and *Leaderaft* table at Figure 23 in Chapter 6. Secondly, it examines the limitations of Levinas' ethics to the extent where the authors conclude that ethics is best served 'by working in the indissoluble tensions between self and other' rather than by adopting idealistic or moralizing positions about generosity (Ibid., p. 236). Finally, it uses a story by Czech author Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, to assist in rethinking the interaction between reciprocity and ethical demands for generosity claiming that the use of literature is a valuable and important means for understanding organisation and business. In so doing, it not only reinforces the creative practice research methodology and scriptology (Rhodes, 2018) this PhD adopts but it also answers the call of Australia's Chief Scientist Alan Finkel for more 'stories that illuminate' in order to enrich our need to understand the essence of being human (Finkel, 2016), as detailed in the introduction.

The gap between social and economic ethical relations can be largely illustrated in the *Leadership: Leaderstern and Leaderaft revisited* table at Figure 25. This PhD acknowledges that it is possible for reciprocity in the form of the calculated market-based exchange expectation of getting something in return for your deeds to apply on both sides of the table, based on each of the principles. However, it is reciprocity located within an environment of individualism in the 'organisation first' principle as distinct from collectivism within the 'society

first' principle that emerged through the '5 Whys' exercise in Figure 23 that illuminates the gap.

LEADERSHIP	
‘Open your heart to others as a leader...’	
‘Leaderstern’	‘Leadercraft’
Principle: An ‘other’ is an employee of an organisation first, then a human being living in a society.	Principle: An ‘other’ is a human being living in a society first and foremost, then an employee of an organisation.
Market based exchange	Service of others over self-interest
Reciprocity	Generosity
Mind (mental calculation) - experience is passive and subordinate to consciousness	Body (embodied feeling) - experience is active and primary to consciousness
Structured – a singular state of being	Processual – an ongoing state of becoming
Objective relations	Intra-subjective relations
External (what happens to us)	Internal (what we make of what happens to us)
Socially constructed, static, linear system along a single plane	Natural, evolutionary, nonlinear system of multiple intersecting planes
As an ‘other’, I am a noun – a socially constructed category	As an ‘other’, I am a <i>verb</i> – an integral function of the universe
The world emerges from the subject	The subject emerges from the world as an organism, a potential for every ‘becoming’
‘Leadership’ is an event or thing	‘Leadership’ is a process of becoming

Figure 25 – Leadership: Leaderstern and Leadercraft revisited

I am not arguing that one side of the table is correct and the other side is wrong. I am arguing that the experimental, not-knowing approach of creative practice research allows us to float to one side such binary divisions as right-wrong, leader-follower, frozen-unfrozen. In short, to ‘let

it go'. By submitting ourselves to vulnerability – trying to be comfortable being uncomfortable by permitting ourselves to 'not know' – new insights have the potential to emerge. And in this PhD, I argue that a view has emerged where the way we construct our understanding of complex things in organisations becomes *in our minds* the thing we are trying to understand, when *in our bodies* we sense there is something awry. In other words, we fix, or freeze, things in an intellectually honest, valuable attempt to understand them, then we forget we have done so by failing to listen to, or prioritise, the ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007) detected in our bodies. Consequently, our constructed representation of leadership becomes the simplified version of leadership itself. Our constructed representation of change becomes the simplified version of change itself. And so it goes.

Regarding the latter, in recent 2020 revisions of the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, Harvard scholar John Kotter's '8 Steps' for successful change management model (Kotter, 1995; 1996; 2012) detailed in Chapter 6 of this PhD was added to Act 2 Scene 2 and Act 4 Scene 2 of the playscript. This resulted in an exchange between Penny and KG in Act 4 – that dismissively sidelines Fatima's pleas to KG in a desperate attempt to win-back her job – after the objectives of Penny's transformational corporate change program were betrayed by 'Jools' in Canberra:

[Disregarding FATIMA, PENNY bursts-in to interrupt the conversation, her cabin luggage making a loud bang as she slams it onto the stage. The spotlight slowly follows FATIMA, her head bowed as she forlornly shuffles off-stage, leaving the voices of PENNY and KG to be heard as the lights fade.]

PENNY *[angrily]*: ... so all the regions have completed our staff cuts – in good faith – then Canberra decide they can't afford to cut any positions. It's outrageous!

KG *[backing away, hands gesturing tone it down]*: Shhh. It'll work itself out, Penny. There must be good reason.

[...]

PENNY *[shouting in exasperation while picking-up her luggage]*: It's a done deal Ken. FULL STOP. End of Story. The decision's been made!

KG *[grabbing PENNY by the elbow and steering her to the side of the entrance, patrons looking over at the kerfuffle]*: Calm your farm, Penny. I'll look into it for you.

PENNY *[crying out in frustration]*: It's just not good enough! They do it all the time.

KG: Um, can I just ask one thing ... you know, so I don't make a fool out of myself with Canberra?

[PENNY, standing defiantly with hands on hips, invites the question by slightly leaning-in towards KG.]

KG: Which one of John Kotter's 8 Steps does this fall into again?

My research question in this PhD relates to leadership. In their subjective experience of *Work. Life. Balance.*, readers or audience members might form differing views regarding the constructed representation of leadership in the play. Readers or audience members will bear witness to the action. Witnessing is an ethical act in itself. One observes the other and in doing so one may know an 'other'. In the scene immediately above, both KG and Penny fail to *witness* Fatima's desperate pleas. Then, Penny's sense of betrayal is greeted by KG's attempt to calm her down, rather than *witness* her outrage. When KG seeks to protect *himself* from looking foolish in the eyes of Canberra Penny's solitary sense of betrayal is heightened. Further, I argue that the organisation chart at the beginning of the playscript, comprising the cast of characters in their clearly marked job titles or 'positions of leadership', is a tangible illustration of the 'fixing or freezing' of leadership which almost *assumes that leadership will follow* from the very existence of leadership titles on the organisation chart. Following Rhodes and Westwood (2016), scenes such as this highlight the chasm between human responses to organisational experiences and economic or scientific responses.

Regarding the second point, Rhodes and Westwood (2016) conclude that ethics is best served 'by working in the indissoluble tensions between self and other' rather than by adopting idealistic or moralizing positions about generosity (Rhodes & Westwood, p. 236). The authors argue that the shift in business ethics away from *reciprocity* in terms of a mutual 'back-scratching' expectation of return or reward towards one of *generosity* to others 'without prior calculation of whether one will receive something in return' (ten Bos & Willmott, 2001; Hancock, 2008) supersedes market-based exchange. Rhodes and Westwood argue that this shift is 'based on an either/or logic that seeks to locate ethics in oppositional relation to reciprocity (Ibid.). However, by arguing that 'ethics is not best served by adopting idealistic positions regarding generosity but rather by working in the indissoluble tensions between self and other' (Ibid.) an important question emerges: Is all tension between self and other in organisations indissoluble?

It may be a valid position to adopt in diversity cases involving antagonistic views on age, gender, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, education, and national origin. However, applying it to the focus of this PhD in terms of the direct day-to-day experience in organisations in the artistic-aesthetic fourth quadrant (Taylor & Hansen, 2005, see Chapter 2 Figure 5) involving the leader-follower, management-staff dialectic, I argue that the tension between self and other is primarily one of self-serving choice. It is *not* an indissoluble tension but one where abuse of power or resistance to power is central to a resolvable tension. However, I agree with the authors' central claim that the answer lies within each of us. It is not a question with no answer but a 'question of our complicity' (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016, p. 247). Further, in this PhD I contend that this process of working inside the tension first occurs through our bodies as a *force of form* (Manning, 2016) before we become conscious of it. The answer lies within our embodied capacity to affect and be affected in our internal relation with experience in terms of *what we make of* what happens to us. Consequently, the atmosphere attunement to which Stewart (2007) refers, through paying attention to ordinary affects, is important to answering 'the question of our complicity'.

Balance: Work-life, life-death

The 'pretence of equality' resulting from the 'double move of responsabilization and moralization' identified by Rhodes and Westwood (Ibid., p. 237) which side-steps power-asymmetry to increase pressure on employee productivity is supported by critical management studies scholar Peter Fleming (2017). Fleming argues that the so-called homo-economicus, the persona of the rational, self-interested, utility maximising 'economic man' that underpins much economic theory is an unattainable damaging myth that individualises economic forces that result in overwork and personal debt. The changing trends in employee management theory have seen a blurring of the strict division of work and life, where the passionless, mindless-subordinate nature of the 'organisational man' has gradually been substituted by Liberation Management, which intends to free workers to be themselves at work and to bring their 'whole person' to work. 'When employees can authentically "be themselves" they are more likely to voluntarily enact the "buzz of life" in tasks that increasingly require interpersonal virtuosity, authenticity (especially in the service sector) and self-organized knowhow' (Fleming, 2014, p. 878). However, Fleming argues that commanding employees to 'be yourself' using basic Taylorist styles of scientific management is 'much like

“ordering” a child to play or have fun’ (Ibid., pp. 878-879) and is counter-productive to the employee-led innovations and initiatives that the business seeks to capture and exploit. Consequently, a shift has occurred towards evoking non-work lifestyle themes into workplaces and normalising value-adding ‘work’ beyond the office in homes, cafes or in relaxed holiday destinations.

According to Fleming, this generalization of work time and space becomes a highly embodied form of *biopower* (Foucault, 2008), where our jobs are no longer what we *do* but what we *are*, and is an ominous shift that makes us ‘permanently poised for work’ (Ibid., p. 884). Positioning biopower firmly within a capitalist context of class relations, exploitation and divergent politics and emphasising the distinction between remaining organisational control forces, i.e. bureaucracy and technocracy, Fleming introduces the term *biocracy* as it ‘disabuses us of the idea that corporate initiatives related to Liberation Management and ‘authenticity’ merely entails the relaxation of [...] hierarchical power relations (which do not disappear)’ (Fleming, 2014, p. 885). On the contrary, as Ross (2004) maintains, biocracy supports the management realisation that creative ideas and solutions can surface anytime, anywhere so ‘the goal was to extract every waking moment of an employee’s day’ (Ross, 2004, p. 52). In essence, the ominous shift to make us permanently poised for work is a deceptive, exploitative, inauthentic attempt to allow employees to be their true, authentic selves when ‘at work’, whatever the time and place might be. These are valid concerns to which my experience can relate, as illustrated in the Caffeine Kaylene Reflection – but do they represent the whole story?

In Chapter 6, the emergent realisation of the *post-authenticity* nature of the PhD was illustrated. This also emerged through a range of literature in the field regarding the roots of ‘authenticity’ embedding through scholarly disquiet about the global economic crisis. Authentic leadership was presented as a solution to prevent business leader behaviour creating economic turmoil (Caza & Jackson, 2011). It ‘gained momentum by recognizing a malfeasance of leadership as trigger and driver of economic crisis’ (Wetzel, 2015, p. 42) and ‘became a highly ranked topic amongst scholars and consultants’ (Alvesson & Svenningsson, 2013, p. 39). In his critical analysis of the topic, Belgian business scholar Ralf Wetzel argues that the failure of authenticity is based on unrestrained assumptions: (1) that leaders’ identities are homogenous and ‘the surroundings of this homogenous self is homogenous as well’ (Wetzel, 2015, p. 42); and (2) the organisational context in which leadership takes place is oversimplified (Yukl, 2012). Wetzel addresses this through rationalist, interpretative and neo-

institutionalist approaches to organisational theory represented by 'faces', which can be found in any modern organisation (Kuhl, 2014). Wetzel describes these 'faces' and their core features as follows:

Formality: Taylorist, Fordist notions of rationality, consistency and objectivity;

Informality: subjective, disordered and irrational, able to be formally framed but not controlled;

Façade: a different reality based on neo-institutionalist thinking that decouples internal policy from external demands (or scrutiny) (Wetzel, 2015, pp. 44-46).

The latter must avoid being discovered as a secretive veil because it is beneficial to the organisation to remain concealed from view for the purpose of simplification, unification and maintaining a convincing positive impression (Huzzard & Ostergren, 2002). Focussing on corporate social responsibility (CSR), as one example, Christensen, Morsing and Thyssen (2013) argue that having a façade is important in order to present an image of organisational authenticity that can be trusted and believed-in by an external audience. Once again, we see parallels with the university lecture in Chapter 3 where future managers are educated in the art of 'appearing' to have empathy so that employees 'will tell you everything'.

According to Wetzel (2015): 'If formality is the skeleton of an organisation and if informality is the flesh, then the façade represents the organisational skin' (Wetzel, 2015, p. 45).

Consequently, he calls for 'smart leaders and managers' to not only perform their roles as detailed on their formal role descriptions, but also to 'partly cover omnipresent contradictions ... and to partly expose the same contradictions to the staff at the right moment of time ... [in order] to develop the faces of an organisation ... in order to keep organisations awake and resilient' (Ibid., p. 48). Whilst acknowledging the potential confusion and difficulty of the task, Wetzel maintains: 'Leaders in fact are paid to *perform* the differences they contain ... to perform and to play the own identity into action' (Ibid.) (original emphasis and phrasing).

In Chapter 6, my sense of being a management imposter was expanded beyond the secret union card-holder, arts-based management practitioner to include a sense of needing to 'play' or *perform* the manager role in 'the organisational game', never giving 'opponents' (both staff, peers and superiors) any ammunition to fire at me. If this view of leaders as *performers* who *play* their identity into *action* is correct, would it not make perfect sense to examine leadership and organisations through the lens of creative practice, employing arts-based methods to

lower the veil, to catch a glimpse behind the organisational façade of the messy, disordered, irrational underbelly of organisational life?

Returning to Rhodes and Westwood (2016), the third and final important point to this PhD relates to their use of a story by Czech author Franz Kafka, *The Metamorphosis*, to assist in rethinking the interaction between reciprocity and ethical demands for generosity. The authors claim that the use of literature is a valuable and important means for understanding organisation and business. In so doing, the potential value of the creative practice research methodology and scriptology (Rhodes, 2018) employed in this PhD is reinforced. In *The Metamorphosis*, the protagonist Gregor awakens one morning to find himself transformed into an ugly insect. Through their examination of the work, the authors argue that 'a story of what happens to self-interest and reciprocation when the other person one is dealing with becomes so 'other' that one can no longer see him through any real mode of identification' enables us to reconsider 'issues central to scholarship in business and organisational ethics' through an alternative creative lens (Rhodes & Westwood, 2018, p. 240). They find that Gregor's alterity results in him being 'excluded from ethics' (Ibid., p. 243) because the imperatives required for identification and reciprocation in preeminent economic rationalism are no longer in existence for Gregor. 'Reciprocity knows no alterity; it knows no generosity' (Ibid., p. 244) thus negating the Levinasian ethical requirement of 'setting the other before the self [that] supersedes market-based exchange' (Ibid., p. 236).

Furthermore, the challenge to Levinasian ethics regarding 'the entry of the third' or *other* others involves a shift from ethics to justice. *The Metamorphosis* is employed to reveal that this requires a 'weighing-up' between several others that is guided by an interest in 'preserving the family' (Ibid., p. 245). Here, the relevance to this PhD is in the institutional cover-ups, lies and deception exposed in each of the three recent Australian Royal Commission proceedings, including the treatment of whistle-blowers such as former CBA employee, Jeff Morris. In the early scenes of *Work. Life. Balance.* the new Values, Ethics and Conduct policy are launched by the leadership team. Despite this, subsequent scenes involving workplace victims ostracised by The System and belittled by the singing and dancing *Okie Dokie? Day 'in crowd'* evokes a similar experience to Gregor in *The Metamorphosis*. However, this PhD argues that such victims are *not* ugly, unrecognisable insects. They are *not* so 'other' that the perpetrators of organisational bullying and harassment cannot recognise themselves in them. An employee is no less recognizably human than a more powerful leader and manager. A leader such as The

Salesman is no less recognizably human than an employee who chooses to mock and belittle him. In such an organisational reality, any intellectual attempts to remove individual morality from the debate is problematic. It must *not* absolve us from our complicity, as we saw from Robert Jackall's vice president of a large USA firm in choosing to absolve himself:

What is right in the corporation is not what is right in a man's home or in his church. What is right in the corporation is what the guy above you wants from you. That's what morality is in the corporation (Jackall, 2010, p. 4).

Perform and play

Art is not a better, but an alternative existence. It is not an attempt to escape reality but the opposite, an attempt to animate it (Brodsky, 1987b, p. 123).

There are good reasons why businesses and governments prefer to frame art as subordinate to more primary economic concerns, and they largely relate to maintaining power and defending the cultural status quo. As Polish sociologist and philosopher Zygmunt Bauman observes:

"culture" stands for the managers' dream come true: an effective resistance to change – but above all, resistance to ... unplanned, undesigned, haphazard change, change caused by anything other than the will of the manager and the manager's definition of what is useful, sensible, and proper (Bauman, 2008, p. 202) (original emphasis).

The consequence of such a dream being fulfilled was an arrangement that 'structures your world for you. It does this as meticulously as possible, certainly much better than democracy does ... The dream is to make every man its own bureaucrat' (Brodsky, 1987a, p. 121). In such a "world of repetitions" that 'excludes relativity, doubt and questioning', there is no room for the arts.

However, as Peter Fleming (2014) has highlighted in reference to biocracy, the world has changed and the passionless, mindless-subordinate nature of the 'organisational man' has gradually been substituted by Liberation Management, which intends to free workers to be themselves at work and to bring their 'whole person' to work.

The changing trends in employee management theory towards Liberation Management not only frees workers to be themselves at work but, arguably, also opens the door for the arts to re-enter the room. If Liberation Management truly intends for workers to be free to bring their

creative, innovative, adaptive ‘whole selves’ to work in a globalised VUCA world, then this would appear to align well with Czech writer Milan Kundera’s assertion that the history of novel writing and other art forms was ‘born of human freedom, of human personal achievement, of human choice – and was developed through improvisation and the creation of its own rules as it went’ (Bauman, 2008, pp. 202-203).

Carl Rhodes (2018) uses the neologism ‘scriptology’ to advance the idea of freedom in organisational studies. In particular, he focusses on the textual politics of *writing* organisation studies about which he expresses concern due to a perception of ‘unquestioned representationalism’ and the prevailing idea that ‘writing up’ research is ‘an after the event activity designed to record and communicate what has already been done and thought’ (Rhodes, 2018, p. 3).

The focus and direction of this PhD project changed course in 2017. The realisation had dawned upon me that the initial plan to interview organisational participants in development programs, at two consultant organisations whose practices include theatre-based approaches to development – *The Theatre of Leadership* and *Serious Woo* – would likely result in ‘representational responses’ from research participants including tidied-up responses from the organisations. As little value would be gained from such an outcome in terms of a contribution to new knowledge, I decided to embark on a creative practice research project in the form of the original playscript *Work. Life. Balance.*, where the emergent, experimental nature of the creative-critical process might enable organisation and leadership studies to be examined through a non-conventional perspective. This was not as a mere stylistic writing experiment, but as an attempt to get closer to the beating heart of the embodied lived experience of organisational events; to try to peek behind the façade. The observation of Rhodes partly encapsulates this intent: ‘Writing in non-conventional forms is not just about a do-it-because-it-feels-good freedom, it is about what can and cannot be said politically’ (2018, p. 5).

However, in this PhD I attempt to go beyond that position primarily because what can and cannot be said politically takes place mostly in a *known* world. The forms of writing described in earlier chapters such as film scripts and verbatim theatre generally present an organisational situation via a particular representational lens through which the creator would like their audience to view the situation, often based on the political persuasion of the author. As Sophie Hope has illustrated through her Colour Wheel of Practice Research, research-through-practice can be an emergent, processual, *not knowing* approach which may result in a creative artefact

that *knows* and a work that *thinks* through the space created for affective embodied lived experience and reflection.

Like Steve Waters' miner, donning the grubby overalls and hard hat adorned with a dusty, flickering light, I have been attempting to work my way out from within the organisational rock, hoping to bring some precious metal to light; a wriggling, vulnerable organisational worm, less concerned about core business than the potential insights at the core of the organisational apple, as full of space and silence as it is of words and intentions (Waters, 2010, p. 1).

There is a dominant distinction in organisation studies between rational scientific writing and other forms of writing. The latter for example include theatre and film scripts, novels and poetry, all of which are often dismissed as 'playful extravagances unconcerned with the serious business of discovering truth and generating knowledge' so are forced to the margins as a 'fringe activity' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 5). To a degree, this is an understandable position. As we shall see shortly via Rhodes (2018; 2020), Plato set the tone for this view of visual arts, poetry and theatre to take hold in western civilisation 'condemning them for their limited function of being imitations of appearances that have no educational or civic value' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 5). However, it is Rhodes' (2018) focus on the aesthetic regime of French philosopher Jacques Rancière (2004, 2009, 2012), where 'the borders between art, literature and science, for example, are rendered vague, moveable and malleable', effectively collapsing the division between 'aesthetico-epistemological expression' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 7). Under the hybridised creativity of the aesthetic regime, dualisms such as experiences previously judged either legitimate or illegitimate, sophisticated 'high' art/culture or unsophisticated 'pop' art/culture are removed as high borders become erased (Ibid.).

One potential benefit of such border collapsing or erasure in writing about organisational life is that it allows a response to calls by Mintzberg (2005) for greater balance in management between science, art and craft, and it supports the argument of Deleuze and Guattari (1994) regarding the mutual lessons shared between science, art and philosophy. This 'process of democratization' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 11) opens the field of organisation studies to the senses as well as to difference and liberation.

In the creative-critical process of *Work. Life. Balance.*, one example of this can be seen in the development of the character Morris Foster. In the initial drafts, the character name was Thomas and he was a silent character with autism, a hard worker with quirky hobbies who was

dispensable, both as a fictional member of FIBS staff forced onto the redeployment list with Victor to make space in Gino's budget for the boat purchase, and as a character in the central plot-line. As the creative practice process evolved, the silent Thomas increasingly *insisted* on his own voice resulting in the character being re-named Morris and finally playing a key linking role throughout the action in an obsessive attempt to discover the identity of the unseen character, The System. This has occurred partly through the iterative cognitive process of playscript development. The decision to rename Thomas following his new-found voice, deliberately named 'Morris' after the ostracised Commonwealth Bank whistle-blower Jeff Morris, who was vindicated by the February 2019 findings of the Banking Royal Commission, to signify the character as one with the rare capacity to shine a light on previously unseen truths. *Primarily*, though, the character Morris has evolved through the creative-critical incubation process of sitting with uncertainty, remaining with an embodied lived experience with the characters, not forcing a cognitive solution but trying to stay comfortable-being-uncomfortable in terms of not knowing how the characters or the action would evolve.

The emergent process for this lived experience routinely involved being woken from my sleep in the middle of a random night, struck by an inspiring idea or a sudden realisation about a character's place. Capturing these ideas also occurred randomly through various means which have included leaving our bed, tip-toeing to the kitchen bench to find a pen and paper, trying not to wake Jane and the kids although usually being accompanied by our trusty pet dog, Hamish; or, keeping a notebook and pen beside the bed to record the ideas as they emerged, most times without turning-on the light so as not to disturb Jane, resulting in a scribbled mess of mumbo-jumbo scratchings that needed to be deciphered in the morning light; or the simple tearing of post-it notes by the bed to remind me to try to recover the idea from the depths of my consciousness following the drifting return to deep sleep that risked losing the idea forever. Figure 26 captures the creative-critical incubation process.

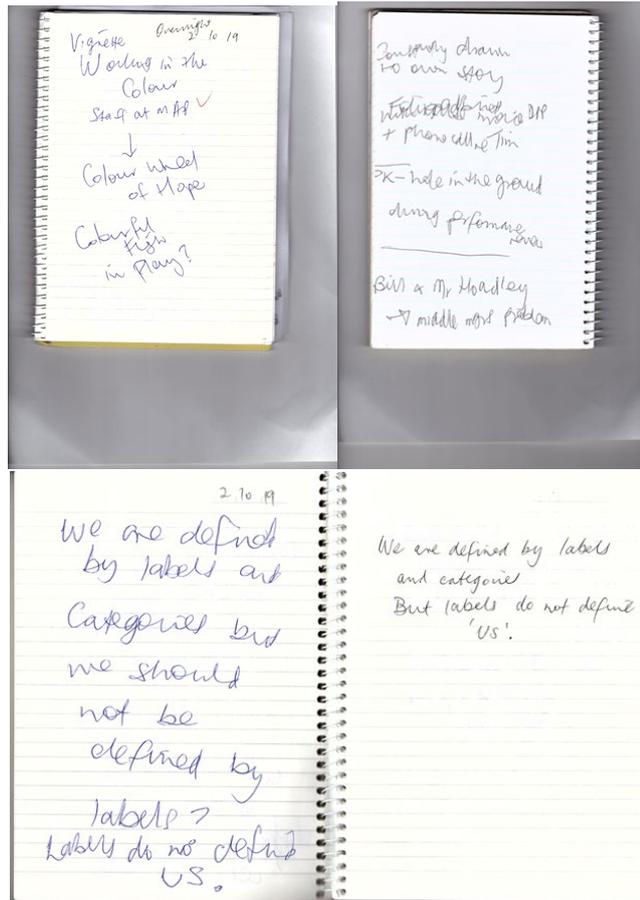


Figure 26 Scratchings in the sand

As mundane as these details may sound, the central impact of the emerging character, Morris, not only in terms of the creative action but also in terms of the critical research component, has been significant. When we first get to hear from The System, the exchange with dispensable Morris is illustrative of this important shift, despite its simplicity:

[As lights dim, the spotlight rises on the warehouse where MORRIS can be seen busily working solo amongst the shipping containers. The backdrop changes to a full bank of computer screens, images and data indiscriminately rotate across the screens. An airhorn boom salute, similar to the airhorn boom sounding the departure and arrival of yachts in the Sydney-to-Hobart annual yacht race, announces the presence of 'THE SYSTEM', an unseen character whose intimidating, robotic voice, in rich, deep timbre, can be heard as MORRIS stands alone, centre stage, in the spotlight, staring straight ahead into the audience.]

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: Your skills are no longer relevant for the dynamic world in which we now operate.

MORRIS [*head swirling around in search of the voice*]: What?

THE SYSTEM: Your services no longer meet our requirements.

MORRIS [*head swivelling*]: Who are you?

THE SYSTEM: I am The System.

MORRIS: What system?

THE SYSTEM [*ignoring the question*]: The world has changed. Your services no longer meet our requirements.

MORRIS [*swivelling around, scanning the stage, still searching for the identity of THE SYSTEM*]: But, but . . . I don't understand.

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: We currently have to manage a globalised world of Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, Ambiguity.

MORRIS: What's that go to do with me? I'm not a manager.

THE SYSTEM: Management of such a world requires adaptive employees with more diverse skills.

MORRIS [*puzzled*]: What skills?

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: Soft skills.

MORRIS: But I have soft skills.

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: No.

MORRIS [*adamantly*]: I do more container unpacks and ship's manifest reconciliations than anyone around here.

THE SYSTEM [*authoritatively*]: They're hard skills.

MORRIS [*faithfully*]: No, they're not. They're easy. Soft skills are the easy ones.

THE SYSTEM [*definitively*]: No, soft skills are the hard ones . . .

[*MORRIS scratches his head as the spotlight fades.*]

The authoritative voice of The System is seemingly so dismissive and condescending in dispensing with Morris, that his identity might well be compared with the NASA janitor. Yet in Morris' simple, faithful, black-humoured debate with The System about the meaning of *soft* skills and *hard* skills, he highlights some fundamental insights about Rancière's (2004) notion of the 'distribution of the sensible' (Rhodes, 2018, p. 5). Such insights relate to 'culturally dominant ways of thinking, speaking and writing that institutionalise what is simply taken for granted as common sense' (Ibid.). This is particularly the case in relation to binary thinking that *closes* a field to experience and *reduces* the opportunity for diversity, 'difference and liberation' (Ibid., p. 11).

Fundamental to this is the 'gendered character of writing' to which Rhodes (2018) refers, which considers 'the relationship of writing to forms of oppression and discrimination based on sex, gender and sexuality' (Ibid., p. 9) where patriarchal structures ensure masculinity is *hard* and femininity is *soft*. Similarly, the relationship of writing to forms of oppression and discrimination against the value of arts and philosophy in society.

Skills related to science and business are commonly viewed as hard, serious, difficult and significant which in a culturally dominant world of binary, linear thinking leaves skills related to art and philosophy as, relatively, soft, easy and trivial. What Jason Fox might describe as his 'angst phase' or anti-fragile brooding through creative curiosity becomes viewed through the capitalist productivity lens as just 'squandering time' (2018).

Yet artists care enough and are serious enough about their 'work' that they *choose* to commit to a life where 'ideas and creativity were just as likely to surface at home or in other locations', a situation about which the critical study of biocracy by Fleming (2014) exposes as exploitation because 'the goal was to extract every waking moment of an employee's day' (Fleming, 2014, p. 889). My experience of the creative-critical process of this research has been one that Peter Fleming might describe as an 'extreme case', much like the example he provides of 'Lucas's (2010) fascinating autobiographical account of life as a computer programmer [which] describes how he began to solve code problems in his sleep (Ibid., p. 881). In other words, I argue that 'sleep working' and being 'permanently poised for work' (Ibid., p. 884) is a fundamental feature in the working 'life' of the artist.

Fleming and other scholars have raised valid and serious concerns regarding the high likelihood of worker exploitation as a result of the removal of boundaries between 'life' and 'work', concerns that have been vindicated too often in the seemingly endless media stories about

workplace exploitation, bullying and harassment by unscrupulous employers, some of whom appear to believe that they *own* their employees. However, equally valid questions exist for many, not all (sadly), public servants in terms of who *owns* my labour; what is value; what do I believe in; and who or what controls my motivation to live according to my beliefs?

In his study of motivation, Daniel Pink (2010) details elite economics scholarly research funded by the US Federal Reserve Bank, which highlights that *autonomy*, *mastery* and *purpose* are the key drivers of human motivation, as distinct from monetary rewards which the study found only have a motivational effect on human behaviour in basic mechanical tasks; that is, in terms of a simple, linear ‘carrot and stick’ approach to motivation. The fictional Morris Foster might define such mechanical tasks as the *soft* (easy) skills of ‘container unpacks and ship’s manifest reconciliations’. The choice that many artists make is to prioritise autonomy, mastery and purpose over monetary rewards, to erase the boundaries and commit their *whole* selves to their work through being permanently poised for work. Creative practice would appear to be a hard, serious and significant endeavour that has great potential to benefit the study of organisations, management and leadership not in terms of usurping existing approaches but complementing them, working in harmony together, as Mintzberg (2005) has argued. As detailed in Chapter 6, ‘harmony assumes variation, not sameness’ (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 242) thus emphasising the potential for creative practice to enable leakage away from the ‘circling the same buoys’ trap that constrains our search for remedies to the current perilous state of organisational leadership (Hughes, 2016).

Striving

This chapter began with a story about a rock: the ‘giant pebble’, Uluru. And it was a story about a ‘giant pebble’ that inspired the title of my play *The Myth of Themanus - 21st Century Leadership in Action*. I first read the ‘giant pebble’ story in my undergraduate Bachelor of Arts degree when it appeared in a compilation of philosophical essays on The Meaning of Life. One essay by French philosopher Albert Camus, titled ‘The Absurdity of Human Existence’ detailed the story of *The Myth of Sisyphus* in which Sisyphus was condemned by the gods to ceaselessly heave a large rock (or giant pebble) up a mountain only to, upon reaching the top, have it roll down the other side of the mountain whereupon he would repeat the painstakingly futile action – for eternity. The gods reasoned that there was no more dreadful punishment than pointless, hopeless labour. They may have a point. The moral of the story for Camus was that

throughout the experience, Sisyphus found meaning in the emergent incremental improvements he made through embodied lived experience, not only with each pass up the mountain but with each processual heave, with each blistering placement of sinewy hand, crooked finger, hunched shoulder and aching back, with each steadying crunch of gnarled toes into the crushed earth. Sisyphus found meaning in striving for ultimate perfection, or *mastery*, despite knowing that absolute perfection was unattainable. The continuous building of knowledge within academic research is not entirely dissimilar. However, is an identical form of *mastery* being sought by all members of the academy?

In his call for more 'blue-collar writing' in academic discourse, Graham Francis Badley (2016) objects to 'the alien world of *academic language*, the *academic dialect*, the *technical terminology*, and the *onslaught of big words*' (Badley, 2016, p. 513). Citing Michael Billig (2013) and his re-launched attack on social science writing following the apparently defeated attack by C. Wright Mills in 1959, Badley argues that 'defenders of technical jargon, who claim that ordinary language is too imprecise or too corrupted by common usage, *risk turning people into things*' (Ibid.) (my emphasis). Here, clear links can be made to similar sentiments in Chapter 5, in terms of Jason Fox's 'cogs in a machine' and the 'people are things' Border Force cartoon of Michael Leunig. Targeting the defenders of technical jargon, Badley argues: 'They risk reifying the very people their research and writing are meant to help' (Ibid.).

In Chapter 6 I considered the audience survey responses to Steven S. Taylor's play *Ties That Bind*, performed at the Academy of Management all conference symposium in 2002 (Taylor, 2008). One key piece of feedback was revealing:

Of course, the real culprits were probably not present. It [the play] should have been part of the President's Luncheon.

In his paper, Taylor noted that had such attendance by 'the culprits' occurred, 'a much greater effect' was possible with his play (Ibid.). I asserted that *Work. Life. Balance.* differs from *Ties That Bind* because, rather than 'preaching to the choir' (Ibid.), the creation of *Work. Life. Balance.* is trying to resist or delay judgement of others and allow space for the reader/audience to experience the play in their own way. The argument I made was in regard to avoiding distraction associated with the divisive nature of the binary bind. However, that is not to deny that the Academy is not removed from accountability altogether for the role it may have played in contributing to the global distrust and lack of credibility of organisational leadership. The global economic crisis and relentlessly brazen, scandalous behaviour exposed

in a series of Royal Commission investigations has occurred during past decades where the Academy has overseen billions of dollars of research in organisation and leadership by academics constrained under a system of 'publish or perish' (Miller et al., 2011). As the creative practice evolved in the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript a sense of unease emerged. Like the scribbled notes at Figure 26 above, my unease appeared as I was awoken from sleep by a question. I suspect it may have been prompted by news stories about the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences (AMPAS), the prominent awards to mark international recognition of excellence in cinematic achievements. Most Annual Academy Award ceremonies have moments of controversy, as Audrey Malone highlights in her book, *'And the Loser is'* (Malone, 2018). As I laid awake in bed, the question swirling around inside my head was: *Who owns truth?*

The Annual Academy of Management (AoM) conference is attended by many thousands of scholars who travel from around the US and the world to the fortunate US city whose turn it is to host the financially lucrative AoM conference. As Steven Taylor reports, in 2002 there were 6,033 attendees. Founded in 1936, the Academy of Management currently has 18,447 members (Academy of Management, 2020). It is an important global institution. Its conferences are an important meeting of great intellectual minds from around the world. But the question arises: How has our world arrived at such a leadership crisis (Hughes, 2016) when we have esteemed institutions such as the Academy of Management at the helm of global leadership, management and organisation studies knowledge?

One of the first characters created in *Work. Life. Balance.* was a character named Lester from the FIBS marine unit. Lester was to be a key figure in the plan of character Gino Genoa, the Waterside Control Director who was intent on buying a sport cruiser using his government budget. As the development of the play incubated and evolved, the rising conflict between Gino and Victor pushed Lester into the shadows. During 2020, the idea emerged through Lester's constant niggling, urging his creator to rename him. This resulted in playscript revision, not only to change the character name from Lester to Oscar, but also to insert a new line of dialogue, to respond to two questions.

The first question is: *'Who owns truth?'*

The second question is one I have posed freely to university management students in every class I have taught since 2016: *'What are you going to do with power when you get some?'*

The new piece of dialogue occurs in Act 4 Scene 4 after the sports cruiser hits the mintzberg at sea. Rising and falling in the darkness of a night-time ocean, Oscar is listening intently to try to understand what is happening to the damaged vessel when an impatient Gino crudely shouts:

GINO: Don't just stand there like a fucking statue, Oscar! DO SOMETHING!



Reflections
Reflections

**From Management ...
To Leadership! [4]**



Public service

We are nearing the end of the first day of this coveted five-day leadership development program in Canberra. The twenty 'high-talent' participants can hear the sounds of plates stacking and glasses clinking as the venue staff prepare the bar lounge adjacent to the conference room for pre-dinner drinks. The facilitator is working through the remaining slides on his PowerPoint presentation when a participant observation incites discussion.

[Note: Any resemblance to characters in Work. Life. Balance. is purely intentional.]

It went something like this:

OSCAR: We're near the end of Day 1 of this public service leadership program and I haven't heard one word mentioned about the 'public'.

[Laughter.]

GINO: Let's just say it's 'inferred', Oscar.

[Laughter.]

OSCAR: Yes, but wouldn't you think that our focus would be more overtly on the community, you know, the taxpaying public who pay our wages?

[Laughter.]

WALLY: Are you serious, Oscar? Our job is to serve the 'Government of the Day'. The public has got nothing to do with it.

GINO: It's OK Wally, he's been on the boats too long. Must be scurvy.

[Laughter.]

RHONDA: Try to look at it this way, Oscar. We have an election every three years or so and the public vote to elect their Government. The Government develops policy. We serve the Government by implementing its policy thereby serving the public who elected them. OK?

[Laughter.]

FACILITATOR JEFF: Great. Now that we've got that sorted we can get on with the final few slides.

OSCAR: Sorry, Jeff. Why don't we have a bit of fun, here. We're going to be together for five days so it would be great to know where we all stand, wouldn't it? Let's do a quick straw poll. Hands up if you agree with Wally that our job is to serve the Government of the Day and not the public.

[Instantly, eight of twenty participant hands go up, plus Wally's, makes nine. Several participants look sideways around them to see whose hands are up.]

OSCAR: C'mon, it can't be that hard.

[Six more hands rise. Four participants clearly remain undecided.]

OSCAR: We are the future of the APS Senior Executive Service sitting in this room. Surely, we can make a simple decision like this, can't we?

[The remaining four participant hands rise leaving Oscar on his own.]

FACILITATOR JEFF: OK, Happy now?

OSCAR: Sorry, Jeff, but hang on. What happens if we don't agree that the public will be served by Government policy?

[Wild laughter.]

OSCAR: Seriously, what would happen if we didn't implement the Government policy we're being directed to implement?

CHORUS: We'd all lose our jobs!

[Wild laughter.]

OSCAR: So, when you peel back the onion, senior 'Leadership' in the APS is all about our jobs and how we can keep them, is it?

GINO: The bar beckons!

Opening organisation-related research to new 'scriptologies' might help to enable 'the pursuit of a horizon of possibilities [...] a way of continually trying, in our way, to be free' (Rhodes, 2018). Sisyphus would approve.



WORK. LIFE. BALANCE.

ACT 7 Scene 1

[OSCAR and VICTOR are seated on mooring bollards on a pier at the docks, both facing the audience, remaining silent. Maritime images appear on the large screen behind them, rows of colourful shipping containers form the stage backdrop, as the sound of Paul Kelly's song, Careless, plays ... then fades ...]

https://youtu.be/02XQ_Ttln9c?t=50

[musical piece from 0:50mins and fades at 2:25mins]

VICTOR *[quietly, staring at the audience, his hands fiddling with a piece of rope]*: Why d'ya have to save him?

OSCAR *[sombre, staring at the audience]*: Do it for anyone.

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: But nothing's changed ... *[pause]* ... Business-as-usual ... *[pause]* ... Just gunna keep rippin' off the world.

[Silent pause.]

VICTOR: Y'aven't changed him, y'know.

[Silent pause.]

OSCAR: Wasn't tryin' to.

VICTOR: Then ... *[pause]* ... why do it? ... *[pause]* ... Why not let 'im drown?

[Brief silence.]

OSCAR: Life's too precious. For all of us.

[The large screen displays VICTOR's anguished face.]

VICTOR: He doesn't think so ... *[Throws the rope into the audience.]* ... Happy to see terrorised migrants die. Terrorised staff ... *[pause]* ... Worthless ... dispensible.

OSCAR: All lives are equal.

VICTOR: No, they're not! ... *[pause]* ... Nothing is equal in FIBS ... *[pause]* ... in the eyes of the powerful ... We're human capital ... commodities ... to be used then discarded.

OSCAR: It's not only FIBS, Victor. It's the world ... It's politics ... it's the human instinct to compete and conquer ... only the fittest survive.

VICTOR: The morally unfit survive better than anyone.

OSCAR: There's good and bad in all of us ... *[pause]* ... Who am I to judge ... who lives ... who dies?

VICTOR: Don't have to worry ... *[pause]* ... if ya part of the 'in' crowd.

[Silence.]

OSCAR: It's a game, Victor. Gino's just playin' the game ... We all have to play the game to some extent ... if we want to survive this world.

VICTOR: You're just as guilty as the rest of 'em ... *[pause]* ... Play your stupid game, while people suffer; people die ... *[pause]* ... And you had a chance to hold a bully to account ... get his just desserts.

OSCAR *[raising his eyes to stare at VICTOR]*: So, it's an eye-for-an-eye, is it?

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR *[shaking his head]*: That's just another game ... *[pause]* ... where YOU wanna control the rules.

[VICTOR remains silent. A close-up of OSCAR's face appears on the large screen behind them, cheeks sagging, tired, sad eyes, lips tense, the strain evident.]

OSCAR: The system hardens our hearts.

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Even worse if you get some power ... some skin in the game.

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: What d'ya want me to do ... *[pause]* ... tear out my own heart and become just another player in YOUR game?

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Want me to become toxic, too?

[VICTOR remains silent, staring at the audience.]

OSCAR: I've hurt people Victor ... *[pause]* ... People I love.

[VICTOR remains silent, staring at the audience.]

OSCAR: It's not just about Tessa and the kids ... *[pause]* ... Gino's a son, a father, a husband, a brother ... *[pause]* ... How would my family feel if it was me in that water?

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Must be somethin' good about the 'bad guys' ... *[pause]* ... when there's people out there who love them.

[Brief silence. OSCAR and VICTOR both stare at the audience.]

OSCAR *[changing tack]*: So ... *[pause]* ... what are you gunna do?

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Media?

[VICTOR looks down.]

VICTOR: ABC ... *[pause]* ... Fairfax.

[Brief silence.]

OSCAR: You're not gunna win y'know.

VICTOR *[shrugs]*: Too late now.

OSCAR: System's always gunna find a way to discredit you if it wants to ... protect organisational image at all costs.

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Senior people don't want to be seen as not knowing ... questioning their leadership ... the organisational culture.

[VICTOR remains silent.]

OSCAR: Whistle-blowers' lives get destroyed.

VICTOR *[deadpan]*: I know.

OSCAR: Then why do it?

VICTOR *[turning to face OSCAR]*: If it's only a game ... bit of fun ...

[Brief silence as the large screen captures a close-up of VICTOR'S face.]

VICTOR *[wry grin]*: ... work-life-balance?

[OSCAR stares at VICTOR, as if pleading for a serious answer.]

[After a brief pause, a small commotion occurs at stage left as MORRIS runs onto the stage.]

MORRIS *[excitedly]*: Victor! There you are!

VICTOR *[wearily]*: What's happenin' Morris?

MORRIS *[excitedly]*: You know how you've always said: 'When it's down to you and me, it'll always be 'us'?'

VICTOR *[puzzled]*: Yeah.

MORRIS: Well, I've finally worked-out for us who The System is!

VICTOR: Have ya?

[The music of Paul Kelly's song, Careless, begins playing again.]

https://youtu.be/02XQ_Ttln9c?t=50

I know I've been careless

I lost my tenderness

I've been careless

I took bad care of this

Like a mixture in a bottle, like a frozen over lake

Like a long-time, painted smile I got so hard I had to crack

You were there, you held the line, you're the one that brought me back ...]

[MORRIS points towards stage left.]

[The spotlight shines at stage left where an air of expectancy is allowed to build. The air horn of THE SYSTEM sounds as ROWAN enters, walking across the stage and stopping in front of VICTOR, facing the audience. Timed to marry with the music, following closely behind, is WALLY, then a short distance later, SANDRA and TAMIKA, then BRENDAN, then ELLIE, then RHONDA, then TAYLOR, then GINO, then FATIMA, then WILL, then PENNY, then HOPE, then, spinning its way across the stage, the Revolving Door of JOOLS, GERRARD, DOROTHY and PHIL, then JUDY. KG appears then stops after a few steps, turning to exit again causing PENNY and HOPE to chase Ken, grabbing him under his armpits, his back laser straight, legs stiffly extended, comically dragging him backwards to centre stage, standing him up amongst the rest of the cast.]

VICTOR and OSCAR join the line of characters across the stage, silently standing, staring into the audience. As the final chords of the harmonica sound, the characters step apart down the middle of their line creating a central space on the stage. Seated on a stool in that central space is DEE staring directly towards the audience.]

DEE: I am neither knowledgeable nor ignorant.

[Pause.]

[DEE stands and joins the line of characters staring straight ahead into the audience.]

DEE: I am neither leader nor follower.

[Pause.]

Drive. Drift. Drown.

[Pause. The chorus of characters join DEE, in unison, for the penultimate line.]

CHORUS: I am neither captive nor free.

[A cry rings out from one dissenting voice as he exits stage left.]

WALLY: I am!

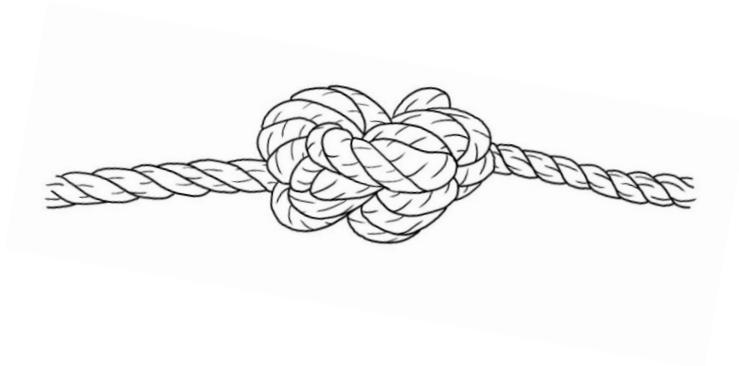
[Lights fade.]

Music Walk on the Water begins playing on a large screen behind them, to the right, during which scrolling images appear: a rolling sea; waves crashing into the base of rocky, impenetrable escarpments; surfers cruising on an orderly set; VUCA (Volatility. Uncertainty. Complexity. Ambiguity.) in organisations; spiritual images of a Christ-like figure walking on water; hand-carved timber canoes; tall ships at full sail; black-and-white images of migrant ships; cruise liners squeezing under Sydney Harbour Bridge; winged keels; sports cruisers; leaky wooden boats; heavily laden container ships; 'high-rise' container stacks on wharves; a single red tanker floating on the horizon between sea and sky; stormy, threatening seas ...]

https://youtu.be/8TB_5quXz-w?t=15

*Walk on the water
You can reach the dry land,
Walk on the water
And hold it in your hands . . .
Sometimes I know I think too much,
I think so much, I just lose touch,
With whatever's going down today;
But I have seen so many of you,
Walking on the water,
And I know where it is I want to be –
Walking out there with you on the sea ...*

THE END.



VIII A TEMPORARY MOORING

Wave

verb:

1. move one's hand to and fro in greeting or as a signal.

synonyms: gesture, gesticulate, signal, sign, beckon, indicate, motion, nod, bid; wag, waggle; swing, shake, swish, sweep, swipe, brandish, flourish, flaunt, wield, flick, flutter

"we waved *hello*"

2. move to and fro with a swaying motion while remaining fixed to one point.

synonyms: ripple, flutter, undulate, stir, flap, sway, swing, waft, shake, quiver, oscillate, move; blow

noun:

1. a long body of water curling into an arched form and breaking on the shore.

synonyms: breaker, billow, roller, comber, ripple, white horse, white cap.

2. a sudden occurrence of or increase in a phenomenon, feeling, or emotion.

"the wave of immigration"; "a wave of strikes and resistance"; "a wave of self-doubt"

synonyms: flow, rush, surge, flood, stream, swell, tide, deluge, torrent, spate, billow, surge, rush, ripple, spasm, thrill, frisson, shiver, tingle, stab, dart; upsurge, welling up, outbreak, rash; feeling

3. a gesture or signal made by moving one's hand to and fro.

synonyms: gesture, gesticulation, hand movement; signal, sign, motion, indication

4. a slightly curling lock of hair.

"his hair was drying in unruly waves"

synonyms: curl, kink, corkscrew, crimp, twist, twirl, ringlet, frizz, coil, loop, undulation

5. Physics – a periodic disturbance of the particles of a substance which may be propagated without net movement of the particles, such as in the passage of undulating motion, heat, or sound.

synonyms: ripple, vibration, oscillation, undulation

Phrases:

make waves – create a significant impression

wave something aside – dismiss something as unnecessary or irrelevant

(Stevenson & Waite, 2011).

Hope is not a prognostication.

It is, alongside courage and will, a mundane, common weapon that is too seldom used.

Zygmunt Bauman (2009)



As we float towards our temporary mooring, I wonder whether or not a useful contribution has been made. Have I managed to strengthen that single fibre within the base yarn, plied yarn and rope yarn that constitute one strand of the larger organisational rope? Like Michael Billig (2013), I realise that I am whispering in the wind. But I am grateful for the wind. I can take heart at the sound of the sails fluttering comfortingly in the gentle breeze as the raging rivers and rolling oceans – never the same – continue their flow, in an unceasing process of becoming.

In our high-speed, globalised world of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity, where our political, legal, economic, social and religious systems are experiencing unprecedented challenges, technology is advancing at a rate (of knots) difficult for many people to comprehend and disruption to our natural environment threatens our very existence, it is an understandable plea to want to stop the world and disembark. A state of stillness and peace is a desirable dream in our *free* trading globalised world. However, there is an irony in such a desire. Although artist Hans Holbein might argue that deathly stillness can only be found in the eyes of his Ambassadors rather than in his anamorphic image of the skull, the only place where stillness can be achieved is in a cemetery hole such as the one where Kaylene will be laid to rest with a total absence of mourners. How will she know? How will any of us know? Our kids had better be at my burial or they'll be in trouble – removed from the *will* and deposited into the *won't*.

And there is a case in point. You can play games with words: shift them and shape them, spin them and mould them and make them do whatever you want them to do. Writing allows us to

do that. It is not a trivial matter, as Elspeth Probyn reminds us: 'writing affects bodies. Writing takes its toll on the body that writes, and on the bodies that read, listen or view' (Probyn, 2010, p. 76). Writing comes in many different forms. The dominant form in leadership, management and organisation studies generally conforms to existing research paradigms. These include a *positivist* worldview implying scientifically verifiable research able to be proved or disproved, a *non-positivist* approach implying knowledge situated in a specific context and that acknowledges researcher subjectivity and a critical-theoretical paradigm which focusses on critical engagement with 'ideologies which restrict human freedoms' (Dash, 2005).

Creative practice research such as that presented in this PhD aligns to a non-positivist tradition, and the experimental 'not knowing' nature of the work is consistent with other artists who 'knowingly' use this intuitive approach as 'questions and methodology emerge through making, doing, and testing things out' (Hope, 2016, p. 77). This can create a form of 'reciprocal ignorance' between mainstream scientific approaches to research and artistic approaches, with the former being criticised for being 'too analytical, elitist and objectivistic' and artists criticised for being too subjective, irrational and driven by 'sublime rapture' (Andersson, 2009, p. 1). The work in this PhD hopes to remove or reduce such reciprocal ignorance. My hope for the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript is for it to be read and performed but not for a select group of 'high talent' leaders on a leadership development program, as was my aim with *The Myth of Themanus*, post the EMA. I have come to learn through this PhD that such an approach reinforces the binary divide between leader-follower, management-staff, employer-employee which I argue is partly responsible for the current crisis of organisational leadership (Mant, 1998; Hughes, 2016).

In Chapters 1 and 2, I considered the 'crisis of leadership' through Alistair Mant's *raiders and builders*; I pondered about the distant influence of Adam Smith, the son of a Customs man, in the swinging pendulum from industry protection to border protection; I zeroed-in on the artistic-aesthetic quadrant of Taylor and Hansen (2005) to consider artistic forms to present day-to-day sensory experience in organisations. I also engaged with alternative perspectives about relational leadership and advocated for playful, experimental approaches to management education, all with a view towards greater balance between science, art, craft, philosophy and being human in a natural world (Mintzberg, 2005; Hatch et al., 2006; Deleuze & Guattari, 1994).

In Chapter 3, I examined The Colour Wheel of Practice Research (Hope 2016, p. 80) and how, in addition to representing the important contribution of its creator, might be aptly renamed The Colour Wheel of Hope. The metaphor of the colour wheel provides a more nuanced development of Christopher Frayling's research terms *into*, *for* and *through* art and design (Frayling, 1994). It offers a more advanced method for handling the relations between theory and practice, which in the case of my research involves the purple section comprising *research through and for (as) practice*. As a practice-researcher creating the playscript *Work. Life. Balance*. regarding a fictional Australian Government department, Federal Immigration and Border Security (FIBS), the focus has been on practice resulting in an outcome where 'thinking is embedded in the artifact' (Hope, p. 82) and where the practice is also examining a perceived problem – in this case, one related to leadership and management in organisations. As a practice-researcher, this has required me to stand *outside* of the playscript artefact (to communicate it) and to stand *within* the playscript (to create it).

As a playwright in this purple section of Sophie Hope's Colour Wheel, the practice is revealing a practice through the practice itself, where the end-product is a playscript 'in which thinking is embedded' (Ibid., p. 83). In addition, by researching through creative writing and researching *as/for* creative writing, my practice also explores an emerging set of ontological and epistemological questions about organisational life. As the essential nature of the playscript is much more than a mere bunch of words, the scenes, characters, plotlines and silent spaces create 'a series of mini-stages for confessions and reflections' not only on the part of the creator, but also in the subjective participatory act of reading the playscript. As Dallas Baker reminds us: 'It is important to note that this participatory act is not dependent on performance, it also happens in the act of *reading*' (Baker, 2018, p. 176) (original emphasis). Future engagement with *Work. Life. Balance*. is open, but my intention is for it to serve individuals' own subjective meaning in the experience of their own lives. This might entail an audience of people in organisations who read the playscript and enter into private critical reflection or a group discussion about perceived insights within it. It might also be staged as a live performance. For reasons that may be apparent, my intention is less about staging a live performance for a select group of 'leaders' in a leadership development program. However, the potential exists for the play to be performed for an entire workgroup across all levels of an organisation where all people in the workgroup are invited to attend with a view to safely opening-up conversations and insights about organisational workgroup culture that may offer new insights or shared understanding about 'others' for *all* people within the workgroup, not

only for 'them', the so-called culprits (Taylor, 2008). In so doing, *Work. Life. Balance.* would adhere to the principle on the *Leadership* side of the table in Figure 23 detailed in Chapter 6 and the related table in Figure 25 in Chapter 7:

An 'other' is a human being living in a society first and foremost, then an employee of an organisation.

The recognition of playscripts as research artefacts or knowledge objects (Batty, 2018; Sempert et al. 2017; Lee et al. 2015; Batty et al., 2017; Baker, 2018; Conroy & Batty, 2020) is based on a range of processes it triggers in the reader one of which includes 'the affective experience containing non-verbal knowledge related to the scripted story' (Ibid., p. 177) where the knowledge occurs in the performative act of reading ... and therefore 'produces not only a theoretical understanding, which it does, but also produces knowledge as an affective experience' (Baker, 2012, p. 178). For example, 'We laugh, we cringe, we cry, we feel good, we feel bad, we sympathise, we identify, we rage' (Baker, 2017, p. 327). I argue that we also might empathise, relate and connect in a way that other more conventional forms of writing about organisations falls short of encouraging.

What has emerged through the PhD, in the *Work. Life. Balance.* playscript, is an artefact of organisational communication. It has the potential to act as a translator of conventional management communication between management and staff for the benefit of both. Such communication is often dutifully created by so-called *white collar*, sophisticated, educated or literate managers trained to write to impress their superiors. This occurs despite their words having little meaning for so-called *blue collar*, unsophisticated, uneducated or illiterate staff who struggle to comprehend 'management speak'. In the case of organisational change programs, I argued in Chapter 6 that if the people who are required to implement the change have difficulty trusting and connecting with the organisational language used to communicate the change, the potential for successful change is significantly reduced.

The call by Badley (2016) for more 'fruitful dialogue' through blue-collar writing in the academy identifies the risk associated with abstract, obscure academics potentially 'reifying the very people their research and writing are meant to help' (Badley, 2016, p. 513). Badley cites a quote from the attack on social science writing launched by Wright Mills in 1959:

Desire for status is one reason why academic men [*sic*] slip so readily into unintelligibility ... to overcome the academic prose you have first to overcome the academic pose.

- C. Wright Mills (1959) (*Ibid.*, p. 511).

In Chapters 4 and 7, I examined the value of paying attention to the *forces* of form in ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007; Gherardi, 2017a; 2017b; Manning, 2016). I considered how creative practice research can help to open-us up to sensory experience, valuing it above the quick leap to cognitive reasoning, making 'listening to our bodies' a priority in the processual nature of our *becoming*. I then argued that subsequent critical reflection (Cunliffe, 2009) can be ably assisted by creative practice artefacts like *Work. Life. Balance.* as 'The Fourth Thread', building upon Cunliffe's three threads of her philosopher leader. Creative approaches to represent challenges transcending existing social relations, including modes of organisational leadership, culture and change were considered such as literature, film, television and theatre-based approaches with the latter examined through a 'violence in the academy' and organisational change perspective of Steven Taylor (2002; 2008; 2014). The pressure on scholars to 'publish or perish' (Miller et al., 2011) and the economic academic forces who own or control knowledge in the field and drive the imperative was also considered. This academic publishing compulsion has caused critical resistance to arise and novel approaches to emerge. In their use of dual autoethnographic accounts of contemporary academic identity in UK university business schools, Mark Learmonth and Michael Humphreys (2011) highlight the value of experimenting with unorthodox approaches in organisation studies. Their reflections wrestle with the Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde dichotomy of '*weasels*' and '*scholars*', where *weasels* are 'only interested in themselves and getting promotion' and the insightful work of *scholars* 'comes from investigations that have never been near a [...] research grant application' (Learmonth & Humphreys, 2011, p. 108). Once again, images of Alistair Mant's 'raiders' and 'builders' appear. In confessing their own complicity, both Learmonth and Humphreys slowly came to the realisation 'that each of us had not only deceived others – but had also deceived himself' (*Ibid.*). In doing so, they 'unearthed knowledge and exposed at least a little of those secret elements of academic life about which we are not supposed to speak publicly' (*Ibid.*, p. 113). I argue that such secret elements exist in all organisations, not only through the actions of the powerful leaders who attempt to conceal them behind the façades they construct but also

through self-deceiving others in those organisations whose actions – consciously and affectively attentive or otherwise – contain their own degree of self-service.

Many of the seemingly endless procession of organisational leadership scandals involving fraud, greed, corruption, violence, cover-ups, worker exploitation, bullying, harassment and other stories of ethical blindness that have emerged over the past decade or two have been laid bare through excoriated witness cross-examination during Royal Commission hearings and Independent Broad-Based Anti-Corruption (IBAC) proceedings in Australia. With merely a few tacks and turns, tweaks and twists of the organisational rope, the Wright Mills sentiment detailed above could be re-launched for the current world of management, leadership or politics, where office walls are adorned by values and ethics statements and codes of conduct posters which appear to apply only to ‘them’ (the less powerful) not us:

Desire for protection of status is one reason why organisational leaders slip so readily into unintelligible rhetoric ... to overcome the management speak you have first to overcome the management sneak.

- With ‘2020’ retrospection to C. Wright Mills (1959)

The sea-shell (shall) roar

The organisational leadership landscape would appear to be ripe for new forms of writing to help us to understand the phenomenon. It is fully understood that the use of creative writing in the form of a playscript might appear to be a questionable approach, especially in a world seemingly obsessed with economics, groomed to respond to ‘hard’ scientific facts and seduced by more instant VUCA-world gratification. I acknowledge that as a reasonable claim to make. However, the experimental approach that tries to evoke and render experience, as distinct from representing or reporting it, is a subtle, longer-term view. It attempts to explore innovative ways to develop attention and empathy in organisations, in order to work *with* the raiders, who will forever be present. In Chapter 1, the playscript *Work. Life. Balance.* commences with Dee, whose dialogue introduces the identical words that also appear at the very end of the play:

I am neither knowledgeable nor ignorant.

I am neither leader nor follower.

Drive. Drift. Drown.

I am neither captive nor free.

I argue that through Dee, we see the immanence of leadership. This is a form of Deleuzian writing related to non-linear texts that defy closure (Hein, 2019). Boundaries and borders become blurred. Leakage is ever-present. A beginning is also an ending but in a processual world without end.

In Chapter 7, the interwoven final scene of *Work. Life. Balance.* leaves the audience/reader with their own subjective meaning to take from the open-ended leakage in Wally's departure and final words. As the chorus unites with Dee in declaring: 'I am neither captive, nor free', Wally breaks ranks and declares: 'I am'.

We the audience, however, are left to decide: Is Wally saying 'I am *free*' or is he saying 'I am *captive*' (to the capitalist system, perhaps)? As educational research scholar Serge Hein asserts, 'in poststructuralist philosophy, immanence means to 'remain within' so 'to be immanent to something is to be a part of it' (Ibid., p. 89). The subjective experience of some readers and audience members who engage with *Work. Life. Balance.* might reveal a similar insight. We are *all* The System. The System is *all* of us. Rhodes and Westwood identified this when they sought not simply to condemn business but 'to take the more ethically challenging position of understanding it from within; that is from within ourselves [...] to question our complicity' (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016, p. 247). To respond to the question in terms of leadership, we can turn to experimental portmanteau terms such as *Leaderstern* and *Leadersraft* and the key principle applied to each. We can also turn to Zygmunt Bauman and his argument that sociological and organisational compassion and balance with the ecosystem that supports their very existence is central to addressing the question:

If solitude marks the beginning of the moral act, togetherness and communion emerge at its end [...] [W]e live in society, we are society, thanks to being moral (Bauman, 1993, p. 61).

I have argued that human beings inherently know this. *Work. Life. Balance.* characters such as Gino and Will know they are damaging the lives of Victor, Morris and others but choose to 'play the game' for their own self-serving interests, as if organisational life is like a sport where '[w]ork is regarded as another kind of 'fun activity' to be elected by 'worthy' individuals' (Kociakiewicz & Kostera, 2014, p. 52) and the winners take all of the spoils; Sandra and Tamika

know they are exploiting The System and choose to ignore, or bury their heads in the sand, about the stress it is causing the pregnant Ellie; Rowan knows he is facilitating the dubious deeds of Gino but chooses to sell his soul for a cup of coffee. These are but a sample of characters who choose to engage in what Bauman describes as a process of *adiaphorization* which involves organisational members on both sides of the leader-follower binary morally distancing themselves from their actions and choices (Bauman & Donskis, 2013). But, to question our complicity requires us to *care* about it. If I am a 'raider', with an attitude of: 'We're here for a good time not a long time' or 'The winner takes it all' why would I care? Michael Leunig reflects this using similar terms in Figure 27.

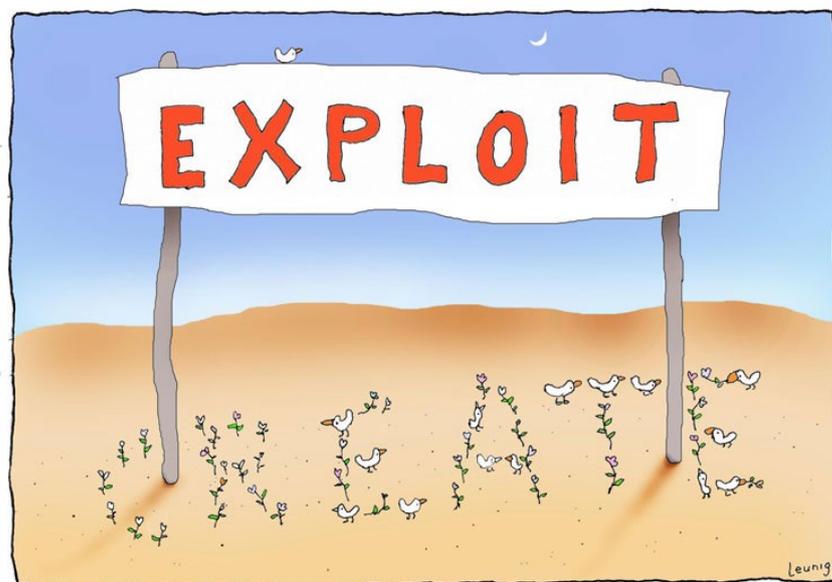


Figure 27 Exploit – Create (Image courtesy of Michael Leunig)

Then again, if I am a *raider* or a *builder*, an *exploiter* or a *creator*, and I *do* care, then in order to critically reflect on my complicity requires atmosphere attunement, paying *attention* to my embodied experience with ordinary affects (Stewart, 2007).

Anne McCrary Sullivan, a US arts-based researcher, has wondered about how we might teach attention, that is, *deep* attention to our lives and world. Most artists listen closely to the world around them and this is a key element in script or screenwriting (Waldeback & Batty, 2012, p. 13). Almost representative with the desirable state of stillness detailed in the opening of this chapter, McCrary Sullivan chronicles her experience with high school students. She would take

them outside of the classroom onto a broad lawn and ask each student to spread out, alone, and stare at a small patch of grass, making a precise record of 'what happens there' (Barone & Eisner, 2012, p. 40). McCrary Sullivan described what took place, despite the high scepticism of her students:

"Just stare", I would say. "Stare at the grass until something happens." No-one ever failed to see things. Small events became sources of excitement – an ant crawling up a blade of grass, a flutter of motion produced by a breeze, a shifting of light, the crossing of a cloud shadow (Ibid.).

Not only do experiments such as these demonstrate the unceasing processual nature of our world but they also help us to see things and say things that would otherwise be unseen and unsayable.

If we had a keen vision and feeling of all ordinary human life, it would be like hearing the grass grow and the squirrel's heart beat, and we should die of that roar which lies on the other side of silence. As it is, the quickest of us walk about well wadded with stupidity.

- George Eliot, *Middlemarch* 1973, p. 226

In 2013, while working full-time in Customs and completing the EMA, my aim in writing the play, *The Myth of Themanus*, was to rid ourselves forever of binary 'them-and-us' thinking. Since 2017, through the creative-critical process of this PhD research, I have come to the realisation that it may not be binary thinking, per se, from which we need to be freed.

As detailed in earlier chapters of this thesis, the natural inherent value of an opposing force in our lives has been an essential part of our growth, development and progress as human beings since the parent-child binary of our childhood. Indeed, in 1894, when the International Olympic Committee (IOC) was formed, the Olympic motto *Citius, Altius, Fortius* proposed by Pierre de Coubertin would be drained of its spiritual force, and no longer as relevant as it remains today, had human Olympic athletes not had an opposing force to help them to go "faster, higher, stronger". Adam Smith's 'invisible hand' in market-based exchange is founded on competition. As Albert Camus identified, even the life of the eternally *striving* Sisyphus, would be devoid of the same meaning without the opposition of his rock.

An opposing force and binary thinking are important elements for a balanced, progressive life; not the *only* elements, as Mintzberg (2005), Hatch et al. (2006) and Deleuze and Guattari (1994) remind us, but one important part. Despite limitations in their argument for Spinozian ethics against the ‘impossibility’ of Levinasian ethics, Thanem and Wallenberg (2015) accentuate the value of mutual striving in the Spinozian perspective:

it is the entanglement of ethics with embodied and political reality which makes it ongoing and unfinished; it is its ongoing and unfinished nature which accentuates practical action for our mutual striving and flourishing within and beyond organisations; and it is the emphasis on mutual striving which makes it brutally honest and more realistic than any ethics of recognition (Thanem & Wallenberg, 2015, p. 248).

I contend that in organisational leadership *collective care* leads to *mutual striving*. This is demonstrated in the short poem in Chapter 6, *The Turn* – the turn from stern to tender on the *Leadercraft* side of the table in Figures 23 and 25 (in Chapter 7). That is not to argue that there is no place for the individualism that emerged on the *Leaderstern* side of the table at Figure 23, but, referring back to Mintzberg (2005), Hatch et al. (2006) and Deleuze and Guattari (1994), balance is required. The so-called ‘failure of leadership’ identified in the findings of a number of Royal Commissioners in Australia, UK parliamentary enquiries such as *In Professions We Trust* and by scholars, journalists and the general public may be more accurately described as an absence of ‘*leadercraft*’.

Furthermore, creative practice research enables our mutual striving in organisations and business. In the investigation of organisational leadership and management through the alternative lens of a dynamic, ongoing, intra-subjective process of embodied experience, such as in *Work. Life. Balance.* – in the midst of things and (immanent) relations – the scenes, characters and plotlines can be viewed beyond external relations (i.e., what happens to us) to internal relations (i.e., what we *make of* what happens to us). Future work is required to determine how to build a more sustainable bridge between business and arts. A positive start might be a reassessment of the use of terms such as ‘soft’ and ‘hard’ that appear to be counterproductive to genuine, respectful, collaborative engagement between fields and which reinforce the prevailing hubris of business management. In my experience, including in this PhD, the devoted work of a creative practitioner is as serious, earnest, all-consuming and *hard* as the work of most management practitioners. Business schools would benefit from permanently welcoming-in creative practice researchers and their methods into the business

faculty. By removing or reducing boundaries between faculties and establishing creative practice as a complementary permanent addition to the business curriculum a more human-centred balance for students, staff, faculty and their respective current and future 'stakeholders' may emerge. A mutual striving is required beyond educational and managerial notions of *appearing* to have empathy and 'outing' our humanity purely for the self-serving instrumental purposes (Taylor, 2014) of the most organisationally powerful member of a relational leadership exchange. To continue the Chapter 6 experiment, what might happen if we were to apply the principle of *'leadercraft'*, to universities, not only in business schools but also in faculties of arts and social science? As a simple example:

Principle: A 'student' is a human being living in a society first and foremost, then a student of a business school or arts faculty.

Principle: A 'faculty member' is a human being living in a society first and foremost, then an employee of a business school or arts faculty.

Principle: A 'manager' is a human being living in a society first and foremost, then a manager of a business school or arts faculty.

Might this be one small step in mutual striving to reduce the toxic 'violence' (Taylor, 2002) in our organisations?

Appropriating Barbara Czarniawska (2009) in their study of Kafka's *The Metamorphosis*, Carl Rhodes and Robert Westwood argue that literature should be considered as far more than mere fictive description of life in organisations. They argue that literature 'is of value to studying organisations on account of the theories embedded in it, especially in the case where such "theories latch onto deficiencies of the dominant thought system" through a well-established tradition by which novelists "formulate theories of society before the social scientists"' (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016, p. 240).

In this PhD I argue that there are 'deficiencies in the dominant thought system' related to organisational leadership. I propose that the use of creative practice research – such as through creation of *Work. Life. Balance.* – is valuable in formulating theories of society to examine those deficiencies *as a whole*, to comprehend the issues contained within them and to enable the critical reflection (Cunliffe, 2009) required to address them.

Floating free

As a result of undertaking this PhD, it now occurs to me that the positive features of binary thinking, those that challenge us and help us to mature and progress in our lives, may have been hijacked by liquid modern forces in our organisational lives – and in our lives more generally. It may not be binary thinking from which we need to be freed, after all. However, it might be freedom from the ‘binary blame-game’ that is at the core of the issue.

Employing the blue-collar language called for by Badley (2016), perhaps we need to rid ourselves of a mindset in relation to the opposing forces of ‘the other’ that constitutes a message of ‘stuff *them*.’ An example of this appeared in Chapter 6 where audience members of Steven Taylor’s play, *Ties That Bind*, at the Academy of Management conference lamented the ‘culprits’ at the President’s Luncheon. According to Fox-Kirk (2017), the rules of the ‘game’, or doxa, are written by the powerful elite, and individuals affected by the rules engage in strategies to either ‘conserve or transform’ power relations (Fox-Kirk, 2017, p. 446). The former strategy, to conserve power, maintains the status quo and is based on an unconscious or automatic acceptance that the game is worth playing and the rules are just and fair. As detailed in previous chapters, a *post-authenticity* perspective emerged as this PhD progressed. Despite this evolution, authentic leadership (AL) theory retains relevance through its assertion that the rules of the game can become ‘falsely naturalised’ and result in flawed conclusions (Zander, 2013). Further, wasteful and damaging practices in organisations ensue through training and development programs based on these false assumptions (Ford & Harding, 2011).

According to Fox-Kirk: ‘Conversely, a few individuals will act to transform unequal power relations and try to change the doxa, or rules of the game, *for their own benefit*’ [my emphasis] (2017, p. 446). Indeed, my lived experience of organisational life contains many examples where the ‘What’s-In-It-For-Me?’ or ‘*WIIFM? principle*’ appears to have been the unwritten motivation for action for people on both sides of the manager-staff, leader-follower binary in public sector organisations. ‘What’s-In-It-For-Me?’ would appear to be a perfectly reasonable question in terms of human survival and advancement. As Tonia said in one Reflection, ‘You’re not going to stop me from accepting my bonus’, when that was never my intention; nor had it ever entered my mind.

In Chapter 2, I began with insights about the ‘father of economics’ Adam Smith. When Smith devised the concept of the ‘invisible hand’ in human action he would never have anticipated it might lead to the epitome of an evil and monopolistic trading company, the East India

Company (seafaring sailing ships of the British empire). His eye-witness experience of commercial greed, guile and government domination by the East India Company may have wrought Spinozian sad affects upon Smith. It led him to review his thinking about the human condition, revise his theories about the *virtues* required for a prosperous modern economic market and commercial society and, ultimately, it possibly was the trigger to remove himself from the highly respected public profile he previously enjoyed across the British Empire, Europe and the American colonies. However, his theoretical writings were not removed – once it is written down, given a life outside of oneself, writing takes on a life of its own. And in the case of Smith, his writing was left for future generations of Alistair Mant's 'raiders' to pick the eyes out of his theory in order to perpetually use it for their own self-serving agenda. If anyone complains or tries to blow the whistle, as CBA whistle-blower Jeff Morris did: 'Stuff *them*.' The Royal Commission into Misconduct in the Banking, Superannuation and Financial Services Industry would appear to attest to that, as one of a plethora of examples existing today. So too, with Gino and Victor in *Work. Life. Balance*. where both the protagonist and the antagonist have the capacity to affect and be affected.

However, in the final scene, the statuesque Oscar 'does something' by challenging Victor after the latter criticises him for saving Gino in the tender:

OSCAR [*raising his eyes to stare at VICTOR*]: So, it's an eye-for-an-eye, is it?

[*VICTOR remains silent.*]

OSCAR [*shaking his head*]: That's just another game ... [*pause*] ... where YOU wanna control the rules.

Oscar highlights Victor's complicity in the game (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016). As I argued in Chapter 7, organisational tensions are *not* indissoluble.

In the years post-1776, after *The Wealth of Nations* was published to great acclaim that resulted in enormous wealth for its creator, Adam Smith freed himself from public life, retiring to a much smaller life in his homeland Scotland, buying a nice house in the affluent Edinburgh neighbourhood of Cannongate where he lived quietly with his mother, regularly entertaining a select band of intellectual thinkers as his guests. In his final twelve years of life, Smith secretly gave the bulk of his wealth to charity, commencing work in a new locally-based career, following in the footsteps of his father, as a Commissioner for Customs. No 'fibs'. Smith's

contribution to free market economics provided a blueprint for Governments around the world to use free trade policies for the prosperity of all nations.

The question remains: Have *free* markets and globalised *free* trade produced *free* men and women in organisations? In *Work. Life. Balance.*, is Wally captive or free? Are Victor and Gino free? On 'reflection' are Tonia, Riccardo, Kaylene, The Salesman, Elizabeth – The Wedding Planner, and her nemesis Maggie free? Proponents of Liberation Management might argue that we are freer than we have ever been. Like Peter Fleming and his colleagues, Joseph Brodsky would disagree.

As Brodsky warns us:

A freed man [woman] is not a free man ... [L]iberation is just the means of attaining freedom and is not synonymous with it ... A free man [woman], when he [she] fails, blames nobody (Brodsky, 1995, p. 34).

Zygmunt Bauman (2008) appropriates Emmanuel Levinas and Russian author Fyodor Dostoyevsky in asserting that:

We are all guilty of all and for all men before all, and I more than the others [...] Responsibility is *my* affair. Reciprocity is *his* affair. The I always has one responsibility *more* than all the others (Bauman, 2008, p. 46) (original emphasis).

Bauman's position appears to connect with the revealing title of psychologist Alistair Mant's leadership book, *Leaders We Deserve*.

And so, too, has the lowly, dispensable Morris Foster reached a similar conclusion about leadership in *Work. Life. Balance.*, during the research-led, creative practice of his own becoming.



Postscript – Contagion

Writing a PhD thesis can be a solitary process in isolated lockdown. As I write these closing words, not only am I in PhD lockdown but also State-enforced COVID-19 lockdown. Working from home is now common for millions of people around the world. Work seeping into 'life'. Work–Life–Balance. A surreal sense of stillness has enveloped our world. Tragically, the global death toll continues to rise alarmingly. Millions of families are suffering profound sadness. We are confronting our mutual vulnerability. It implores us to co-operate and connect, while simultaneously demanding we 'raise our mask' and 'stay apart'. It compels us to mutually strive. This faint shimmer heightens my gratitude to the gentle wind. It reminds us that we are not still. If we pay *attention* to affect we can clearly see signs of perpetual movement. Affect is like a contagion. Just as our organisational leadership rockpools leak and ooze and have their boundaries blurred by the ceaselessly rising and receding tides, so too does the spread of contagion. The emergence of coronavirus has changed our world.

Since casting-off on this PhD journey in July 2016, much has changed in the world. The 'splinter in my eye' over decades, which began with a focus on the lack of authenticity in organisational leadership, has become a scourge on the collective psyche of Australia through three damning Royal Commission hearings into institutional responses to child sexual abuse (2017), banking and finance (2018), and aged *care* quality and safety (2020) whose residents are now dying in disproportionate numbers due to COVID-19. Perhaps there is some justification for pursuing the PhD.

Throughout the 2017 banking Royal Commission hearings when key CBA executives were being questioned, a prominent front row seat was regularly occupied by CBA whistle-blower Jeff Morris. On 7 June 2017, a State funeral was held in Melbourne for Anthony Foster following a stroke at the age of 64. The tireless campaigning of the Fosters to bring to account the perpetrators of child sexual abuse fundamentally changed Australia (Lord, 2017).

The election of US President Donald Trump and UK Prime Minister Boris Johnson has seen border closures, Brexit, walls erected and trade barriers reintroduced. Relations between the US and China are becoming so icy they may ultimately freeze into a Cold War. And this, at a time when 'our iceberg is melting'.

Border protection begets industry protection.

A world in reverse? A 'reversion towards [Bauman's] solid modern settings, or [...] a new development striving to move organisations beyond the liquid modern era' (Kociakiewicz & Kostera, 2014, p. 54), beyond an era that seeks to liquidise not stabilise, an era that gives the illusion, or façade, of freedom in micro terms 'yet delivers injustice and suffering on organisational and societal levels' (Ibid., p. 41)?

On a personal level, since July 2016 I have attended 'Four Funerals and a Wedding'. One funeral was my mother's. Mum's demise began with a fall in June 2019, shortly after we celebrated her 98th birthday, when my wife Jane and I were attending our nephew's wedding in the Canadian Rockies. But that's the thing: Life happens. I am grateful for the gentle breeze that spared Mum from the ravages of coronavirus.

The unceasing flow of the river continues evermore. We will never know 'whose side the river was on' (Churchill, 2000, p. 38). My PhD concurs with Barbara Czarniawska on many points but questions her contention that 'Management and organisation studies are not about human nature, but about certain ways of life, and, more specifically, about certain ways of work' (Czarniawska, 2017, p. 75). I argue that management and organisations *are* intrinsically about human nature but not *only* about it. As Holbein showed us with *The Ambassadors*, humanity is but one member of an ecosystem much greater than us. We are but a speck in the cosmos. As much as we try to tame it and frame it, freeze and appease it, represent and resent it, categorise and rationalise it, conquer and control it, it will continue to flow-on.

Creative practice research bestows the great privilege to apprehend our human experience as a whole. It permits us to humbly play our part, free, at least, of 'the intellectual straight jacket' (Dibben et al., 2017), paying attention to allow meaning to be filtered to us through our bodily senses, through emerging awakenings that bleed into us through tiny fissures as we walk in the time of our direct experience, striving to connect not conquer.

Scholars Lewin (1951), Schein (1992), Kotter (1996; 2006) and Taylor (2008) want to 'fix' (*freeze/refreeze*) our world. I agree that the world needs to be fixed. But perhaps we would be better advised to co-operate and connect with a mutual striving that seeks to address the 'question of our complicity' (Rhodes & Westwood, 2016, p. 247) in order to 'fix' (*repair*) our world. Yet another case-in-point. You can play games with words. I remain hopeful that a new development beyond the liquid modern era in organisational leadership is immanent. Hope is not a prognostication. Hope is also not a black-and-white binary. Hope is a processual, embodied, affective human becoming that thrives on '*working in the colour*'.

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